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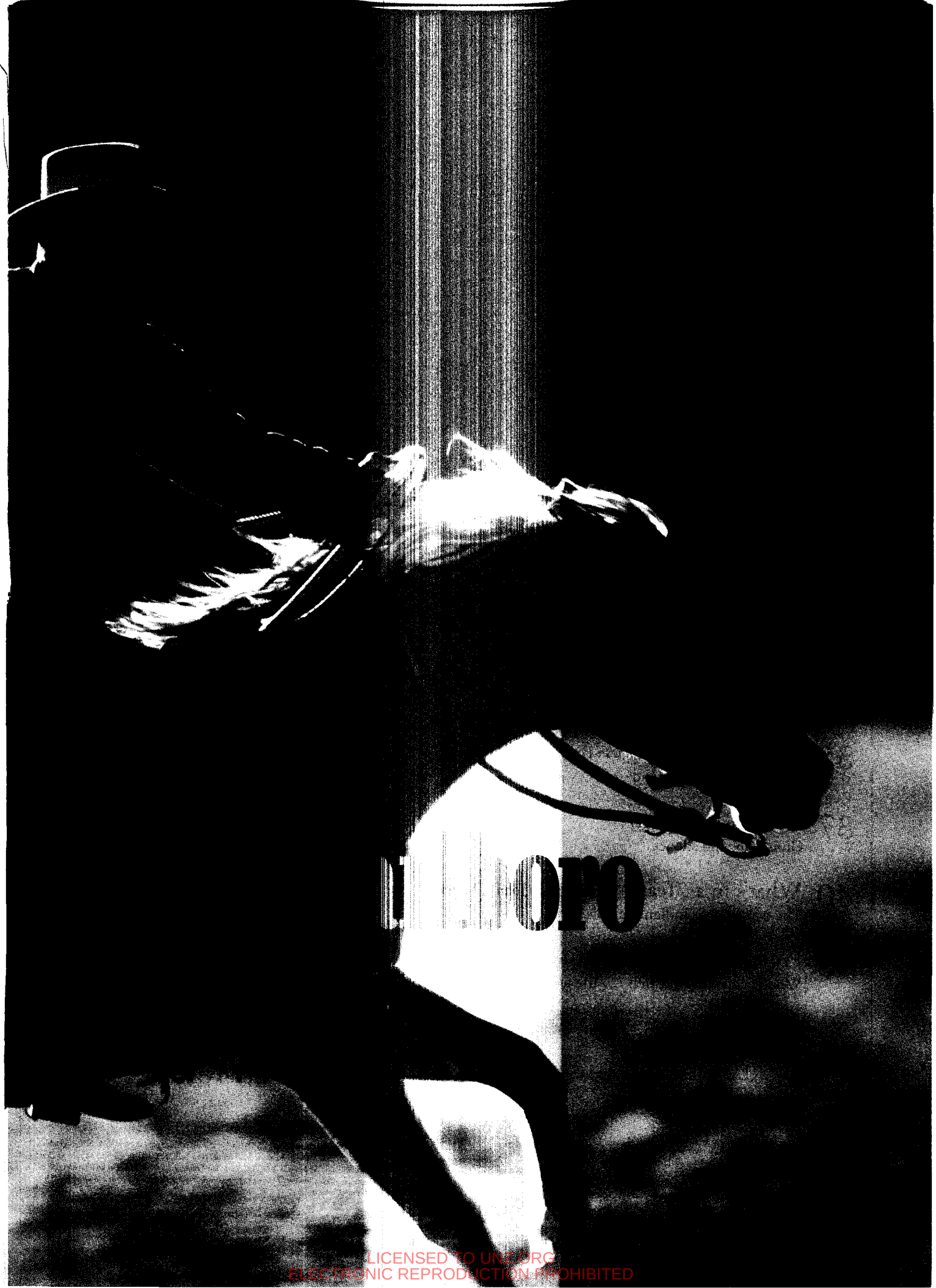

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APRIL 16, 2001 VOL. LIII, NO. 7

ARTICLES

17 Measures Against Malaise *by Steve Forbes*
How to keep the good times rolling.

18 Beware the 'Lockbox' *by Kevin Hassett*
A way into . . . yes, socialism.

21 Disbarred! *by Byron York*
Bush throws the ABA out.

22 Zing Along with Mitch *by Kate O'Beirne*
The Reaganite new budget chief.

24 Don't Box Me In *by Ward Connerly*
An end to racial checkoffs.

26 Guilt and Guts *by Rob Long*
The American political arena as vegetarian restaurant.

30 Is This All We Can Be? *by John Derbyshire*
The military culture and its cheapening.

35 Lefty Nation? *by Ramesh Ponnuru*
What the trends portend.

37 'Bang' *by Jay Nordlinger*
Guns, rap, and silence.

40 What's in a (Team) Name? *by John J. Miller*
The war against Indian symbols.

43 Professor Moneybags *by Dinesh D'Souza*
When academics get rich . . . the agony!

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Bleeding Florida—*Richard Lowry,* **page 49**
Down and Dirty: The Plot to Steal the Presidency, *by Jake Tapper*
Bush v. Gore: The Court Cases and the Commentary, *edited by E. J. Dionne Jr. and William Kristol*

Dynastic Overdrive—*Michael Knox Beran,* **page 52**
Hostage to Fortune: The Letters of Joseph P. Kennedy, *edited by Amanda Smith*

She'll Always Have Paris—*Jeffrey Hart,* **page 55**
String of Pearls: On the News Beat in New York and Paris, *by Priscilla L. Buckley*

Bitter Pill—*David Seidenwurm,* **page 56**
PC, M.D.: How Political Correctness Is Corrupting Medicine, *by Sally Satel*

City Desk: Flip Sides—*Richard Brookhiser on the demise of his record collection,* **page 58**

Film: Dangerous Game—*John Simon on* Enemy at the Gates *and* Memento, **page 59**

SECTIONS

4 Letters
6 For the Record
8 The Week
46 Help!
48 The Long View
60 Books in Brief
62 On the Right
64 The Misanthrope's Corner

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■ LETTERS ■

THE MAYOR'S RECORD

In "The Unmaking of a Mayor" (March 19), John J. Miller wrote that the lesson of Jersey City is "not that the mayor failed, but that perhaps it was not possible to succeed as gloriously as he and so many others had wished."

I don't know how "glorious" Mr. Miller's expectations were, but we have more than surpassed my expectations with what we have accomplished.

We have reduced crime by nearly 40 percent from ten years ago, nearly four times as much as crime has fallen in Woodbridge, where my Democratic opponent for governor is mayor. (By the way, crime decreased by 8 percent last year—not the increase that Miller reported.)

We've closed a $40 million budget deficit with only a 2 percent increase in property taxes, despite ten years of inflation and reductions in state aid. It is the city's budget—not the tax levy, as Miller writes—that has increased by 19 percent. He also incorrectly states that I would like to impose a payroll tax in Jersey City. I would not.

While we were not able to convince the legislature to pass a school-voucher proposal, we were successful in passing charter-school legislation, and I am continuing the fight for full educational choice. If I am elected governor, we will pass legislation increasing private educational options also.

Jersey City has had ten times the job growth of the next five largest cities in New Jersey combined; is now host to 75 percent of the trading volume of the NASDAQ; now has 12.1 million square feet of Class A office space; and has the third-fastest-appreciating home values in the United States.

Given that Jersey City was in a financial free fall when I took office, with businesses fleeing and crime soaring, I would say we have turned things around in at least a fairly glorious way.

The national Republican leaders who cheered my election were excited by the prospect that a conservative could win in a city that is 65 percent minority with a 10-to-1 Democrat to Republican registration edge. Not only did I win fighting for conservative principles, I was reelected by two landslide victories of 69 and 59 percent respectively.

If all of this doesn't impress you, just how high were your expectations?

Bret Schundler
Jersey City, N.J.

JOHN J. MILLER REPLIES: *If Mayor Schundler doesn't support a payroll tax for Jersey City, he shouldn't have told me during our interview that he did. What he surely can't deny is that he tried to force one on his city three years ago and even defended the tax in court when it was (successfully) challenged by local business leaders. My information on the mayor's property-tax record came from his own campaign office. A fact sheet admits to "a 19 percent municipal property tax increase," which, when adjusted for inflation, means (as the fact sheet says) "Schundler has cut real property tax rates by 6 percent." His own press secretary told me these were the most accurate numbers to use, so I did. Finally, my source for Jersey City's crime rate was the FBI.*

UNTAPPED RESOURCE

Ramesh Ponnuru and Richard Nadler do an excellent job of demonstrating the lack of communication between the GOP and the average black American, exemplified by the GOP's failure to advertise on black radio ("The Simplest 'Outreach,'" March 5). In a similar vein, I note that another fertile, yet overlooked, venue for connecting to black voters is historically black colleges and universities. As an instructor at one such university recently told me, there are a sizable number of students, particularly at the business schools, who would be receptive to the Republican message—if only the GOP would talk to them. Further, these young men and women are at a time and place in their lives where they may be the most open to GOP ideas. Yes, there are College Republican clubs on many of these campuses, but given the situation outlined by Ponnuru and Nadler, it's no wonder that typically their membership is small, and that they have difficulties obtaining faculty sponsorship.

Joanne Sadler Butler
Alexandria, Va.

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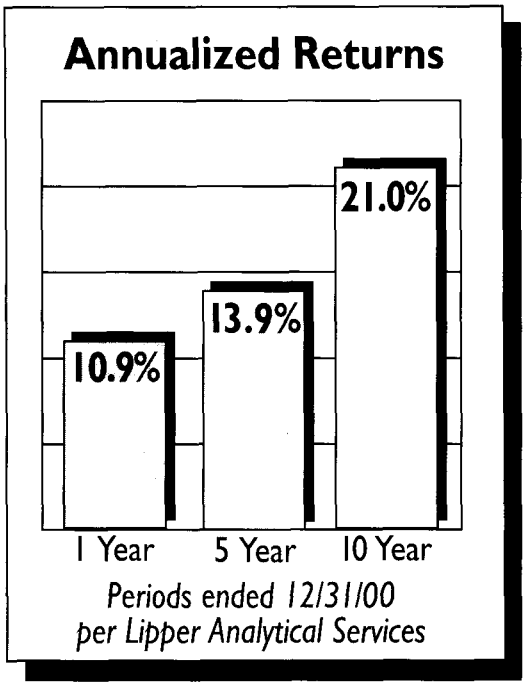

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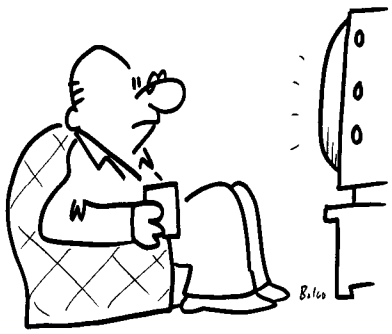
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ Heritage Foundation president **Edwin J. Feulner** on **Bush** administration, in *New York Times*: "More Reaganite than the **Reagan** administration." . . . **Paul Weyrich** of Free Congress Foundation: "I've been through five Republican administrations, and the effort to communicate with conservatives and to understand our concerns and address our concerns and involve us in the process is the best of any of the Republican administrations." . . . President Bush withdraws 62 executive and judicial nominations made in last days of **Clinton** administration, but doesn't rule out renominating some of them himself. . . . Bush stops using e-mail before inauguration: "My lawyers tell me that all correspondence by e-mail is subject to open record requests," he writes in Jan. 17 missive to confidants, reports *New York Times*. "Since I do not want my private conversations looked at by those out to embarrass, the only course of action is not to correspond in cyberspace. This saddens me." . . . "Are you with the Chinese press? Your English is perfect," says Bush to reporter. "You speak better English than I do." . . . "Those stories about my intellectual capacity do get under my skin. You know for a while I even thought my staff believed it," says Bush at Gridiron Club dinner. "There on my schedule first thing every morning it said, 'Intelligence briefing.'" . . . Bush selects **Gore**-campaign donor **Thomas A. Scully** to head Health Care Financing Administration.

■ *Newsweek* poll: 55 percent approve of Bush tax-cut plan, and 36 percent disapprove. . . . Sen. **Barbara Boxer** (D., Calif.): "After 60 days of the Bush administration, prosperity is in trouble, air quality is in trouble, lakes, rivers, and forests are in trouble, and our drinking water is in trouble, too." . . . Sen. **Hillary Clinton** (D., N.Y.): "The new administration is not just attempting to reverse the last eight years of progress and prosperity, they want to reverse the last 50 or 60 years. . . . It's not just trying to turn back the clock on the Clinton administration; they want to turn the clock back on the **Roosevelt** administration." . . . Sen. Clinton assumes most expensive home-state office rent of any senator, at $514,149 per year. Rent for Sen. **Chuck Schumer** (D., N.Y.), also in Manhattan, is $209,532. . . . In annual *Pig Book*, Citizens Against Government Waste identifies unnecessary spending, including $190,000 to determine why people are moving away from Great Plains states, $300,000 for "manure management," and $700,000 for the University of Idaho's Institute for the Historic Study of Jazz. . . . Pork-per-capita leader is Alaska ($766.11), followed by Hawaii ($391.71), Mississippi ($236.49), West Virginia ($128.47), and Vermont ($114.10). In last place is Connecticut ($7.69).



"A government study, released today, called for lots more government studies."

■ Virginia governor **Jim Gilmore** (R.) ends practice of designating April as "Confederate History Month," replaces it with general acknowledgment of Civil War. . . . Florida secretary of state **Katherine Harris** (R.) proposes to overhaul voting system by eliminating punch-card ballots and buying optical scanners, for $200 million. . . . **Bill Bradley** tells friends, "It's over"—he won't run for president in 2004, according to *Chicago Sun-Times*. . . . In Los Angeles city-council race, candidate **Woody Fleming** criticizes opponent **Jan Perry** for being "married to a white man." (Both candidates are black.) Fleming later says he "meant to say she was married to a wealthy lawyer." . . . California Association of Scholars criticizes UC president **Richard Atkinson** for not removing UC vice president **Alex Saragoza** from post, following proof Saragoza retroactively enrolled two athletes in class that they never attended.

■ Princeton poll: 73 percent say doctors should be allowed to prescribe marijuana for medical purposes, 74 percent say we're losing drug war. . . . **Mark Millar** of Marvel Comics, on his plans to alter superhero storylines, in *The Guardian*: "Superman is such a simple story—everyone knows what he represents—so I decided to turn it on its head: make Superman a Communist, turn Batman into a kind of IRA terrorist, and make Wonder Woman a right slapper." . . . Rep. **Bob Barr** (R., Ga.) threatens to block money for Washington's Metro system until it changes signs acknowledging that National Airport's new name, as of three years ago, is Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. . . . **Nancy Reagan** asks old friends to break off contact with former president because he becomes depressed when he can't remember names of people he should know.

■ "There is a very clear situation here. We absolutely oppose the sale of advanced weapons by the United States to Taiwan," Chinese president **Jiang Zemin** tells *Washington Post*. "If the United States were to sell advanced weapons to Taiwan such as the Aegis [missile-defense] system, that would be very detrimental to China-U.S. relations." . . . North Korea may have 3,000 nuclear experts trained in China and Russia, says South Korean think tank. . . . After German environment minister (and Green Party member) **Juergen Trittin** says opposition pol "has the mentality of a skinhead, and not just the appearance," for suggesting foreigners in Germany assimilate, Greens suffer setbacks in state elections.

■ **Jayne Carroll** Show in Portland, Ore., gets listeners to suggest official name for Clinton home in Chappaqua, N.Y. Entries include Liar's Lair, The Knee Pad, and Bill & Hill's Bribe & Breakfast. Winner: Disgraceland. **NR**

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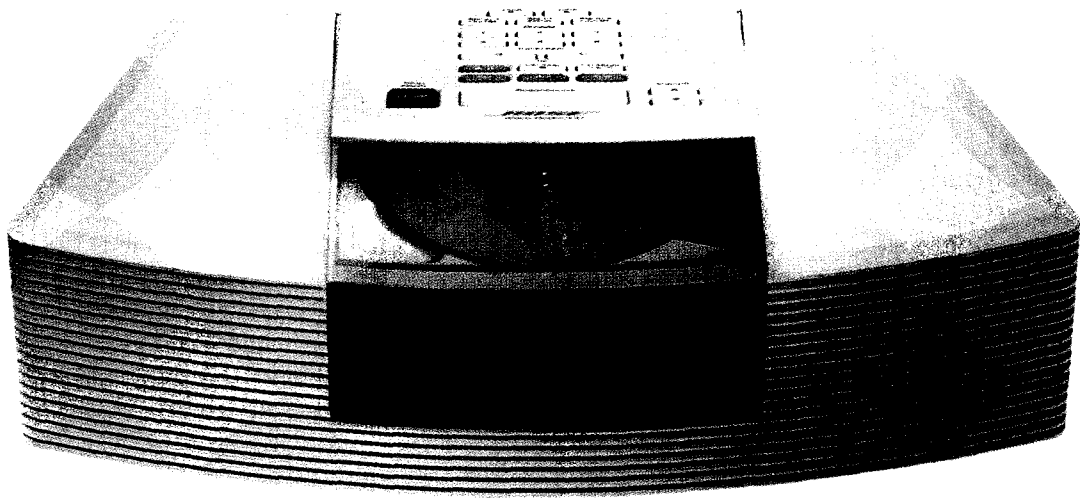

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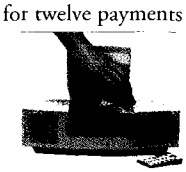

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THE WEEK

■ Word is that Hillary Clinton has joined a Senate prayer group. Better count the Bibles.

■ Democrats are accusing President Bush of "talking down the economy" in order to sell his tax cuts. The idea is that his remarks about economic troubles are self-fulfilling because they hurt consumer and investor confidence. But signs of economic weakness were multiplying before Bush became president. The Nasdaq's slide started a year ago. If Bush were playing Pollyanna in the face of this evidence, the Democrats would be saying he was out of touch—as he is well aware, having watched them do it to his father. Instead, Bush has offered a realistic appraisal of the economy. If that appraisal has reduced consumer spending, it's hard to tell from the data, which show spending to be rising. There is something a little ridiculous about the importance the Democrats are attaching to the president's words: If Bush is making the economy get worse by saying it is getting worse, aren't Tom Daschle and Dick Gephardt equally guilty of making it worse by saying *that*? But perhaps Bush should consider their attack a compliment: It's not often that Democrats are so impressed by his rhetorical power.

■ Not everyone dislikes a recession. When stocks go down, the stock of the gloomy rises. Some savor the gloom because it works to the advantage of the big-government status quo. Privatizing Social Security, as Mark Shields observes every week on *Capital Gang*, "becomes a harder sell when you've got a market, if not in free fall, at least in decline." And how much easier it becomes to sell the notion that government, not you, knows best what to do with your money! Others enjoy a contraction because it takes down the high fliers, the improbably young dot-com millionaires, the owners of all those hideous new mansions described by Tom Wolfe and David Brooks. As Gore Vidal, who has spent many years studying malice, puts it, it is not enough to succeed—others must fail. Finally the Left, not all of it young, yearns for a dustup in times of peace. They rioted in Seattle because America was too prosperous; now they will riot in Oshkosh because America is no longer too prosperous. Can any of the dozen Democratic senators who feel qualified to fill the chair of Lincoln and George W. Bush ride these discontents to victory in 2004? You can bet they're already bent over their abacuses, calculating.

■ Based on the speech he gave at Catholic University, George W. Bush may be the second Catholic president—the third, if you count John Kennedy. How's that? JFK was of course the first formally Catholic president. But he had been carefully de-churched and deracinated by his father, so as to escape the fate of Al Smith. Ronald Reagan had the Protestant beliefs of his mother; but the persona and world-view of his Irish Catholic father clung to him, which, more than policies, may explain his attraction to so-called Reagan Democrats, i.e., ethnic Catholics. Now President Bush, sprung from haut-WASP New England, raised in Texas, and born again, speaks at the dedication of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He called the Pope "a hero of history," defending the "culture of life," and carrying a message of "justice and human rights" to rich and poor, free and enslaved. When was the last time the *National Catholic Reporter* said that?

■ Much has been said about Ralph Nader's keeping Al Gore out of the White House—the Green-party nominee drew more than 97,000 votes in Florida, for example—but hardly anybody has noticed what Libertarians have done to the Republicans. In both 1998 and 2000, a Republican nominee for the Senate lost to a Democrat by a margin much less than the Libertarian vote. The most recent victim was Slade Gorton of Washington. Maria Cantwell beat him by 2,229 votes in a race that saw Libertarian Jeff Jared hauling in 64,734 votes. Two years earlier, Republican John Ensign failed to unseat Democrat Harry Reid in Nevada by 428 votes. Libertarian Michael Cloud drew 8,044 votes in the same election. "Exit polling shows that we take twice as many votes from Republicans as from Democrats," says Libertarian-party spokesman George Getz—which means Republicans might very well have had a 52–48 Senate majority right now if not for the Libertarians. Washington would not be consumed with speculation about Strom Thurmond's health. Those Libertarians who are not intransigent opponents of the GOP should reconsider their tactics. Republicans, for their part, should pay more attention to their libertarian constituents. It's something Trent Lott may want to think about when members of his GOP conference complain that President Bush's proposal to limit federal growth to 4 percent is too austere. If they let government grow, their caucus may shrink.

■ Al Sharpton was ordered to pay $65,000 in damages to Steven Pagones—a former assistant DA in New York's Dutchess County—for defaming him in the Tawana Brawley hoax. That was back in 1998. With interest and penalties, the amount outstanding is now $87,000. The Reverend Al, meanwhile, has developed large political ambitions, which do not sit well with a reputation as a scofflaw. So just pay the settlement, right? Two problems with that. First, it would

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Two Good Reasons for a Tax Cut

David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and an economics professor at the Naval Postgraduate School.

President Bush's proposed tax cut, though small, is a step in the right direction. To put the tax cut in perspective, over ten years it amounts to a cut of only about 1 percent of GDP. Compare that to Reagan's 1981 tax cut that cut taxes by almost 3 percent of GDP. And Reagan did so starting from a budget deficit rather than a surplus.

Unfortunately, Bush and some of his advisers are using a bad argument for a good policy. The reason to cut taxes early, they say, is that the economy is slowing and tax cuts will cause people to spend more. That's a pure "demand-side" argument, the kind that former President Reagan and his advisers rightly dismissed when they advocated the 1981 tax cut. Decades of evidence have shown that the main factor that increases spending is growth in the money supply. If any policy should be used to affect the growth rate of spending, it should be monetary policy.

But we should cut taxes and even more than Bush advocates. Moreover, **taxes should be cut independent of the current growth of the economy.**

There are two main reasons for cutting taxes. First, the current tax system badly mauls incentives. Take people in the top (39.6 percent) tax bracket. In 1997, these people were only 0.7 percent of taxpayers, but they paid 26 percent of all income taxes. High tax rates cause them to earn less taxable income, not just by working fewer hours but also by taking more pay in fringe benefits and investing in tax-free municipal bonds. The across-the-board cuts in tax rates that Bush proposes would increase everyone's incentive to earn taxable income. When the tax cut is fully implemented, high-bracket taxpayers, for example, will be in the 33 percent bracket. Thus, their after-tax gain from an additional dollar of income rises from 60.4 cents to 67 cents, an 11 percent increase. This was the "supply-side" case made by Ronald Reagan and his advisers when they cut tax rates.

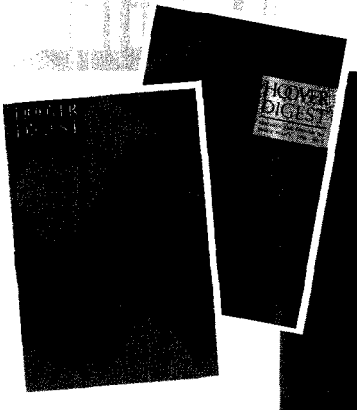
Similarly, cuts in the 15 percent and 28 percent tax rates would increase incentives of lower- and middle-income earners to earn taxable income. This boosts the economy long term and makes tax revenue higher than otherwise. With this feedback effect of the Bush tax cut added in, estimates Harvard University's Martin Feldstein, the feds would lose, not the oft-cited $1.6 trillion but, rather, $1.2 trillion, or less than 25 percent of the anticipated budget surplus.

Some critics of the Bush tax cut claim that it does nothing for lower-income people. But it does cut taxes of everyone who pays federal income taxes. Simple truth: you can't reduce taxes for people paying no taxes.

Which brings me to the more important reason to cut taxes: those **taxes are *our* money,** meaning the money of the people who paid them. If the government keeps the revenue, it will pay down some debt but spend the rest, as it did in the last Congress. We the people need to restrain Congress and the president from spending our money.

— David R. Henderson

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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contradict Sharpton's longstanding claim that he cannot pay because he has no funds. As we are learning, black "community leaders" with the title "Reverend" in front of their names are not awfully keen to have their personal finances scrutinized. Second, as an implicit acknowledgment that the Brawley affair was, indeed, a fraud, payment would baffle and shock those of Sharpton's followers who, incredibly, still believe in the reality of Brawley's "rape" by a gang of white men. One of those followers—he declares he has always believed Brawley's claims—is Percy Sutton, a black media mogul. Sutton has organized a whip-around among New York's black business elite to pay off the Pagones settlement on Sharpton's behalf. So Sharpton is off the hook, with no need to admit that he was a leading participant in one of the worst cases of racial arson of the 1990s, and with a clear path to a position of supreme "leadership" among black Americans. Will no prominent black American stand up and denounce this appalling man for what he is: liar, fraud, and crook?

■ "I want to sign a patients' bill of rights this year, but I will not sign a bad one," said President Bush on March 21. "And I cannot sign any one that is now before the Congress." The president's stance recognizes both the popularity of federal regulation of health plans and the drawbacks of it. Regulation is popular because people have reasonable anxieties about insurers' second-guessing of decisions made by doctors and patients. It is flawed because regulations would increase the price of insurance and thus increase the number of uninsured. So Bush is in the familiar Republican position of accepting a liberal policy in theory while trying to control its cost. The alternative would be to address the root cause of the public's anxiety: individuals' lack of control over their own insurance plans. Bush has, in fact, endorsed policies that would make it easier for individuals to own their own plans rather than rely on their employers. But he is not pushing for those policies. Given his ambitious agenda this year, he may be handling health-care issues the right way. But eventually Republicans should get out of their defensive crouch.

■ Yet another of President Clinton's last-minute regulations has come under scrutiny. This one, had it been implemented, would have reduced the amount of arsenic allowed in drinking water. EPA chief Christine Todd Whitman announced that she would delay, in order to reconsider, this rule. With good reason: Even the National Research Council, which supported Clinton's policy, found no evidence that current levels of arsenic pose any health risks. In order to reduce this non-threat, the policy would have imposed costs of as much as $326 per household in small towns. The water is clean enough; it's Clinton's regulatory record that needs to be cleaned up after.

■ The Bush administration faces an early test of its commitment to free trade. The government maintains a quota on Canadian lumber that, according to an analysis by the Cato Institute, raises prices here by 25 to 30 percent. It adds more than $800 to the cost of a home. While the quota may benefit the American logging and sawmill industries, it hurts industries that are heavy consumers of lumber—which employ 30 times as many workers. It also creates a dispute with Canada that makes it harder to work with Ottawa on international free-trade agreements. The quota expires on March 31, but 51 senators have asked the administration to replace it with another trade barrier. Bush should say no.

■ It seems that the 2000 Census figures for illegal aliens—6 million—should be raised, to 9 million. In other words, there are not two Chicagos of illegal aliens here, but a New York plus a Detroit. The Census was expecting to find 275 million residents of the United States, but instead counted over 281 million, and now a survey conducted as a quality check estimates 285 million. "Unmeasured immigration," as bureaucrats delicately call it, is the source of the unexpected population bumps. As Lee Price, a Commerce Department official, told the *Washington Post*, the illegal aliens had an economic impact: Wages did not rise as fast as economists would have predicted, given falling unemployment, since most illegal aliens work at low-paying jobs. Their labor, of course, helped float marginal businesses, such as farms and restaurants. But cheap labor also reduces the incentive of those businesses to modernize. A recession will reduce the inflow more than President Bush seems, based on his rhetoric, inclined to do. But, unlike in other periods of high immigration, there is less return migration among those already here. Some illegal immigrants will prosper; others will require support. Their assimilation, jeopardized by an initial act of lawbreaking, will be harder thanks to their greater-than-expected numbers.

■ The University of Michigan has become the nation's foremost institutional defender of racial preferences in admissions. Hanging its defense on one justice's opinion in the

BORKED

Between a digit finger and
A gently squeezing thumb,
George Bush picked up the A.B.A.
As liberals, struck dumb,
Observed the icky cargo go,
Without too much ado,
KerPLUNK (some screams ensued) inside
The Oval Office loo.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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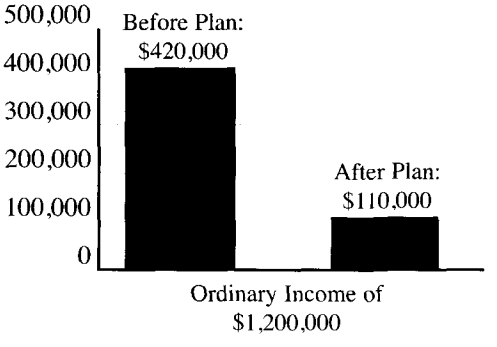
Tax Liability



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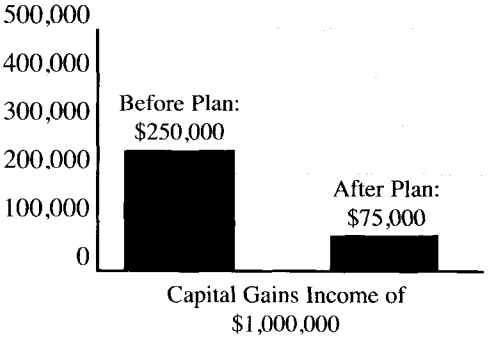

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Supreme Court's splintered 1978 *Bakke* decision, the school argues that ethnic diversity provides such an educational bonanza for students that racial discrimination in admissions is justified. In December, Michigan used this "diversity" defense—hailed by the liberal press as a great breakthrough—to beat back a lawsuit by the Center for Individual Rights challenging its undergraduate admissions. Michigan lucked into a court victory that was indefensible on the law and embarrassingly credulous on the social science (see "Quota U" by Richard Lowry, March 19). Now, another district judge, in a separate case striking down the admissions policy at Michigan's law school, has devastated the university's reasoning. Judge Bernard A. Friedman points out that: 1) the university's reading of *Bakke* is tendentious in the extreme, and the Supreme Court has been turning against claims of justified racial discrimination; 2) diversity of *viewpoints* is more important to education than racial diversity; 3) the university's claim that it needs a "critical mass" of minorities is dubious since no one can say what that "critical mass" is; 4) the admissions policy, though not technically called a "quota" by the university, is indistinguishable from one; and 5) some minorities (blacks, Hispanics) are favored over others (say, Arabs) for no apparent reason. Michigan, of course, will be back in court to fight another day, but its famed "diversity" defense should never look quite as strong again.

■ An 18-year-old wielding a pistol and a shotgun blazed away at a San Diego-area high school late in March, wounding two students and three teachers, while apparently meaning to kill an assistant principal. The shooting stopped when the gunman himself was wounded by a police officer on routine patrol at the school. Three cheers for the policeman's gun. The moral fabric of our nation, of course, was long ago rent—but we can counter with some external controls. In the form, for example, of that police officer. More of them around in large schools might be a good idea. When the moral check weakens, the external check may be the required response.

■ A coalition of politicians and clerics, mostly but not all conservative (it now includes Al Sharpton), is campaigning against slavery in southern Sudan. They may have the attention of President Bush, who mentioned the ongoing outrage in his speech at Catholic University. The line of realistic humanitarianism is a delicate one to draw. War and oppression will always exist, and no nation can take it upon itself to right all wrongs. The opinion of the civilized world does, however, occasionally coalesce against gross practices, such as piracy. The British eliminated the slave trade in the 19th century by a long campaign of diplomacy and threats against Brazil, Portugal, and Zanzibar, the states that profited from the traffic, or were powerless to stop it. Slavery in Sudan is the product of the age-old oppression of southern blacks by northern Moslems, flourishing now in conditions of civil war. Ending it will require many years and shifting tactics. In the meantime, private citizens should focus their attention on the evil—as Jesse Jackson, diplomat and moralist, has so conspicuously failed to do.

■ One of the last typewriter-repair shops in New York City closed its doors, provoking a burst of typewriter nostalgia among the verbal class, a deeply conservative lot by habit, if not by formal conviction. The typewriter was so comprehensible! It ran at the speed of thought! It was tactile! And on, and on. But the typewriter was itself a clattery newfangled mechanism once, and early-20th-century writers worried about its effects. "The typewriter encourages lucidity, but I am not sure it encourages subtlety," T. S. Eliot wrote Conrad Aiken in 1916. Writing is a magical act, and writers will do whatever they can to lure the Muse (the historian Shelby Foote still writes with a pen). But the ultimate question is whether she descends. There may have been lots of blind bards who recited from memory. But we remember only the one who gave us wrathful Achilles and wily Odysseus.

■ The Custard Factory arts center in Birmingham, England, has done something at once ridiculous and important. It has mounted an exhibition in which there is . . . *nothing*. There are no paintings on the walls. There is no sculpture. A few empty picture frames invite the visitor to imagine what might be there. A few scraps of paper cling to the walls, also a bus ticket. The show is entitled *Exhibition To Be Constructed In Your Head*. It amounts to an important theoretical satire. In fact, the end of the line. If anything can be art—as, infamously, at the Brooklyn Museum—then, obviously, *nothing* can be art. There have been few visitors—another vital statement.

■ Unshed those tears for Puffy Combs. When the rap mogul and his posse went to trial for shooting up a nightclub, Combs walked. Defense lawyer Johnnie Cochran helped win the acquittal, as did the quality of the prosecution witnesses (an old problem: thugs ratting out thugs). But Combs's main advantage was that he is a rich, sleek black man, with all the advantages of power and fame, and all the power that accrues to the notionally disadvantaged. It is the O.J. case, repeated as farce—except that, if any of the bullets that wounded bystanders had veered an inch this way or that, it would have been yet another tragedy. After the trial, Combs said, "I give all glory to God." What, they didn't go 50–50?

■ John Phillips, leader of and songwriter for the Sixties rock group the Mamas and the Papas, died at age 65. His was an exemplary career, in several ways. The hits he wrote were better than average, which means, in the context of rock, that the arrangements were catchy and the lyrics evocative, if basically meaningless. His cute model wife and fellow singer slept with another Papa, which irked him, though in the Summer of Love, one wonders why. He did not crash and burn like Jimi Hendrix or Janis Joplin, but he died at a youngish old age because for many years he took

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many, many drugs, including the oldest, John Barleycorn. His fit with his time is so complete that all you have to do to summon 1966, should you ever want to, is sing, *All the leaves are brown . . .*

TAXES

Rebate and Switch

AFTER weeks of flailing, Democrats have found a criticism of President Bush's tax plan that works. It does too little, they say, to stimulate a slumping economy. They're right. Bush's tax cuts would be phased in quite slowly, so most of the relief would occur long after any recession was over. That's the reason the president's economic advisers profess agnosticism about whether the tax cut will help the economy this year—even as Bush travels around the country telling crowds that the tax cut is necessary precisely to help the economy.

The Democrats' alternative is an immediate tax rebate that would return $60 billion of this year's surplus to taxpayers. This plan, however, would not stimulate the economy either. It would give consumers more money to spend. But consumer spending is not the problem with today's economy: Such spending has been rising. It's *investment* that has been declining, and a rebate would do nothing to stop that decline. Cutting tax *rates*, on the other hand, would increase incentives to work, save, and invest.

The weakness of the economy argues for accelerating Bush's tax cut. Republicans have feared to propose a faster tax cut because a faster one would be a bigger one, and a bigger one would be vulnerable to the charge of threatening Medicare. Specifically, the government would have to dip into the Medicare trust fund in 2003 and 2005 in order to finance a bigger tax cut—if, that is, you believe in Washington's make-believe budget projections. And in a Medicare trust fund that is more than an accounting fiction.

This is no way to make economic policy. But no matter how dubious the Medicare argument is, there is no doubt that Democrats would make it loudly if given the chance. Luckily, Republicans have several options to avoid this trap. They could, for example, add a provision to the tax bill cutting capital-gains taxes. That's worth doing on economic grounds: It would, among other things, provide immediate help to the stock market. The history of capital-gains revenues suggests that a rate cut would also raise money for the federal government, as even the official budget estimators agree. Or Republicans could cut spending. Or they could delay the implementation of those Bush tax cuts that do not promote growth (such as the doubling of the tax credit for children).

Or—the boldest option—Republicans could propose to cut tax rates now, but for only two years. When such a tax cut expired in 2003, would Congress really refuse to extend it—and, in effect, raise taxes?

Which options Republicans choose is less important than that they stand for effective, pro-growth tax cuts. The rebate proposal is a diversion. But it has let the Democrats, for a time, talk about cutting taxes more and faster than Bush. They are trying, in a sense, to get to Bush's right on taxes. He can't let them stay there.

PUBLIC POLICY

Faith and Freedom

THE dispute over the president's plan to help religious charities is being portrayed, in the press, as a racial one, with white evangelicals suspicious of the government and black churches more favorably disposed. John DiIulio, director of the White House initiative, made a few ill-considered remarks in a lengthy speech that lent credence to this analysis. But the racial story line is too simple. There are plenty of white religious leaders who support the president's initiative, including Jerry Falwell, who has been mistakenly depicted as an opponent because he brought up some reservations about it. Prominent black clerics such as the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Calvin Butts, meanwhile, have expressed the same concerns about the initiative that white critics have. Racial politics is, here as so often elsewhere, a distraction from the merits of a policy.

The administration's initiative has three components: the lifting of regulatory obstacles to the work of religious charities; the use of the tax code to encourage donations to them; and the opening of federal programs to their participation. Hard-core secularists object to all of these steps, but the initiative's mainstream critics worry only about the last one. They fear that discretionary federal grants to churches—as opposed to tax credits or vouchers—will tend to reduce the churches' effectiveness and, even more important, their independence.

So why not drop the worrisome element of Bush's proposal and concentrate on the worthy parts? John DiIulio tells NR that opening up grant-making to religious charities is key to getting better results from federal programs. He believes that it will be possible to give grants based on results, and not based on the clout of the churches involved, the political relationship between whatever administration is in power and the churches' members, or the biases of the relevant federal officials. And he believes that it will be possible to do so in perpetuity. (It's not called a faith-based initiative for nothing.)

Similar high hopes were expressed at the dawn of another antipoverty initiative forty years ago. Then it was secular non-profit groups that were said to be accomplishing miracles on a shoestring. Federal funding was supposed to take these isolated success stories and replicate them nationally. But somehow it didn't work out that way. The groups that provided services to the poor became a powerful constituency for big government—too powerful to be held accountable for results. The Bush administration should amend its faith-based initiative. It would be a pity if the administration, with the best of intentions, were to repeat the failures of the Great Society.

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CAMPAIGN-FINANCE REFORM

Incumbent Protection Racket

If campaign-finance reform is the solution, what's the problem? It used to be candidates' spending, which was supposedly out of control, promoting a corrupting race for cash. But while earlier reform bills featured limits on candidates' spending, that idea was dropped long ago. Senators this year voted to lift the restrictions on direct contributions to candidates, allowing them to raise and spend more. Last season's corruption is this year's common sense. Earlier versions of reform also attempted to ban PACs, then considered the primary vehicle of Big Money interests in Washington. That idea, too, was abandoned. Now Congress is debating a ban on "soft money" donations to political parties that would actually augment the role of PACs, which give "hard money" donations directly to candidates.

The case for campaign-finance regulations keeps shifting, without ever attaining coherence. But in debating the latest bill—McCain-Feingold—the Senate has achieved an admirable consistency: It is supporting reforms that protect incumbents, and blocking those that do not. Incumbents loathe three things: millionaire candidates, who can overwhelm them with spending; TV broadcasters, who charge them money to run their campaign ads; and independent groups, which can hammer them with negative advertising. McCain-Feingold, as amended on the Senate floor, neatly protects incumbents in all three cases.

One successful amendment would raise the limits on direct contributions to candidates when they face a rich, self-financing opponent. But the rationale for those limits was that unlimited donations are corrupting, or at least create the appearance of corruption. Or are donations corrupting only when there are no millionaires in a race?

Senators also voted to force broadcasters to sell them TV spots at the lowest possible rate. This is a measure without the slightest tissue of good-government justification, but is simply senators wielding their sheer power over broadcasters.

Finally, of course, McCain-Feingold would prevent unions and corporations—a category that includes many advocacy groups—from advertising 30 days before a primary and 60 days before a general election. This provision, too, would work to the benefit of incumbents, who are more likely than challengers to be the target of ads attacking their records.

McCain-Feingold's advertising restrictions are likely to be found unconstitutional, since dozens of court decisions say that political communication is highly protected under the First Amendment. Even John McCain thinks that at least one of the restrictions is unconstitutional (it was added by an amendment that he opposed). Not that this minor matter dissuades him from crusading for the amended bill's passage. (So much for the idea of "restoring confidence in government.") The courts can clean it up later, goes the thinking. But if the courts strike some provisions of the bill, the resulting law might be very different in its effect and character from the one Congress passes.

Hence the need for an amendment that would junk the law entirely if the courts pick off parts of it. But the press dismisses this idea as a "poison pill" (definition: anything John McCain doesn't like). Another alleged poison pill is "paycheck protection"—an amendment defeated on the Senate floor—which would prevent unions from spending dues on political causes without their members' permission. Surely, this is a worse, more clearly identifiable abuse of the political system than any of the fuzzy "corruption" McCain-Feingold purports to fix with its scattershot, ever-shifting collection of regulations.

The premise of all campaign-finance efforts over the years has been that it should be harder for people to donate and for politicians to spend. It is money in general, rather than any particular practice, that is considered corrupting. There are two major problems with this approach. 1) Less money in politics means less politics. As the analogy in *Buckley* v. *Valeo* had it, if you restrict how much people can spend on gas, you restrict how much they can travel. 2) If the goal is to wring money out of politics in general, the regulatory effort will have to become more and more ambitious. If it starves the parties of cash, for instance, it will next have to chase after the independent groups that will spring up to take their place. This is why McCain-Feingold doesn't just ban "soft money" but also regulates outside groups' fundraising, advertising, and "coordination" with politicians. The logic of this type of reform presses toward a system that is hermetically sealed from private donations and dependent instead on "clean" public dollars: socialism for politicians.

If McCain-Feingold doesn't fall of its contradictions, it deserves to fall of its ambitions.

ASIA

Facing Down the Bully

Is the Bush administration willing to face down the bully-boy of Asia? Following China's buildup of ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan, the government of the island nation has asked to buy four destroyers of the Arleigh Burke class (like the U.S.S. *Cole*, attacked by terrorists in Aden last year) equipped with the sophisticated Aegis missile-tracking system. China's vice prime minister, Qian Qichen, visiting Washington, thundered that such a sale would be a "very serious setback" to U.S.-China relations and might ignite "the flame of war." His boss, President Jiang Zemin, took a somewhat milder line, saying that the sales might force China to accelerate modernization of her armed forces.

There are a number of things that need to be said by the administration, not necessarily in public. The first is that the Aegis-equipped destroyers are primarily defensive, and that nobody—not even the Beijing government—claims that Taiwan has any *aggressive* intentions towards China, nor indeed towards anyone else. To which of the following is talk about igniting "the flame of war" more appropriate: the placing of several hundred attack missiles opposite Taiwan in a display of naked intimidation, or Taiwan's attempt to give

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herself some fair warning of those missiles' launch times and flight paths?

Another thing that ought to be said is that no nation busily engaged in selling advanced chemical, nuclear, and missile technology to unstable, nuclear-armed, or nuclear-seeking nations like Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan has any business criticizing the sale of defensive equipment to Taiwan.

For a generation, the American position toward Taiwan has been an ambiguous compromise: recognizing neither China's claim to the island nor Taiwan's independence. And America's unambiguous commitment has been that, however the question of Taiwan's relationship with China is resolved, it must be resolved peacefully. That policy has been successful in keeping the peace. For it to continue to succeed, America must help Taiwan defend herself—and resist any attempts by China to assert a veto over American efforts to do so.

Robert Karniol, Asia-Pacific editor of *Jane's Defense Weekly*, has said that he doubts the administration will infuriate Beijing by selling the Arleigh Burkes to Taiwan, because: "I don't think they have the guts." On the evidence so far from other policy areas, the new administration is, in fact, not short of guts. Do they have enough to stand up to the threats and bluster of Beijing? We very much hope so.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I respectfully note that you misused the word "uxorious" in your column entitled "Pardon Clinton !#*!," which appeared in the Feb. 5 issue. "Uxorious" applies to a man who is excessively fond of his wife, but in your column you erroneously apply it to a woman's fondness for her husband—specifically to Mrs. Clinton's supposed fondness for Mr. Clinton.

But I sympathize entirely with the impulse informing your use of the word. There *should* be a word that means "excessively fond of one's husband."

(Make no mistake: This observation is prompted simply by my sense of justice, and in no way reflects on my own husband, who is a prince among men!)

Indeed, I have long marveled that Gloria Steinem, Patricia Ireland & Co. have not exploited the fact that English provides a word for a man who is excessively fond of his wife, but no comparable word for a wife whose affection for her husband exceeds his deserts, the gentlemen who codified our language apparently having deemed such a situation to be beyond the realm of possibility.

But then, of course, they never met Bill Clinton.

Cordially,
Dr. Brenda Megerle
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Dear Mr. Buckley: In your column "Pardon Clinton !#*!," you discuss Mrs. Clinton's characterization of the impeachment proceedings as "a vast right-wing conspiracy." You go on to state, "We could smile at that kind of thing as nothing more than uxorious docility . . ."

The word "uxorious," from the Latin *uxor* (wife), means an excessive fondness for one's wife, with the negative connotation of "henpecked."

Surely you cannot apply this word to Mrs. Clinton! Or were you implying that the junior senator from New York's deference to her husband was a form of psychological self-mutilation?

Sincerely,
Raymond J. Heisler
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Heisler: Actually, I misused it, and there was *mens rea* in doing so. I mean, I knew that *uxor* is the wife, but I use(d) "uxorious" to suggest excessive docility in either direction, i.e., husband to wife, wife to husband. It is a liberty, but something less than a neologism.

Remember my rule, that for every word there was a felt need. And I felt (feel) the need to suggest the word as here used, and can find no other existing word that does it.

Cordially, WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley: In a recent column, "Pardon Clinton !#*!," you implied that President Clinton's wife (and I use the term loosely) was perhaps guilty of no more than "uxorious docility" when she classified Clinton's impeachment and the related uproar "all as the workings of a vast right-wing conspiracy." You then go on to further excoriate the Clintons for their continued obfuscations.

While I agreed with your mild castigation, I nonetheless had to pause. According to the *American Heritage College Dictionary*, the word "uxorious" means "excessively submissive or devoted to one's wife."

Allow me to suggest that the proper word in that phrase would be "uxorial," meaning "of a wife; regarded as befitting a wife."

When writing of the Clinton paterfamilias, one would indeed be hard pressed to find a word less appropriate than "uxorious."

Sorry for being so pedantic, but I am bringing this up only because you are a member of the aforementioned dictionary's Usage Panel, and I would hate to see Florence King, also a member of the panel, reprimand you without fair warning (if she hasn't done so already!).

Humbly,
Mark G. Brennan
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Brennan: Ah! You came up with it! Though "uxorial" is not quite the counterpart, is it? It doesn't carry the sense of excessive, going no further than dutiful.

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ THE ECONOMY ■

Measures Against Malaise

How to keep the good times rolling

STEVE FORBES

A GROWING number of observers say that we're in for a prolonged period of tough economic sledding: The NASDAQ has wiped away $4 trillion of wealth, and the rest of the stock market is being hammered as well; consumers and corporations are up to their eyeballs in debt; the rest of the world looks blah or even bleak. We went on a binge—dot-coms, this time—and now we are suffering the inevitable, head-splitting hangover.

Hogwash. The doomsters will be right only if we make major policy errors. If the correct steps are taken, we should see the markets rebounding by fall, and the economy expanding smartly by the turn of the year.

The principal villain at fault for these storm clouds is the Federal Reserve. From the summer of 1997 to the summer of 1999, the Fed inadvertently embarked on a deflationary course. Not enough dollars were being created to meet demand in the marketplace. The Fed apparently forgot that the dollar is now an international currency; over two-thirds of our printed greenbacks end up being used offshore. The Fed blunder initially hurt the rest of the world more than it did us—that deflation was an unindicted co-conspirator in Asia's crisis of 1997–98 and in Latin America's of 1998–99—but American farmers began to feel the impact 18 months ago. Then the Fed went further, deliberately deciding to squeeze the economy by ratcheting up rates, because of a mistaken and deadly belief that prosperity causes inflation.

Fed economists confuse price changes that are a result of routine supply-and-demand pressures with price changes that are a result of a debasement of the currency. The oil spikes of the 1970s did not occur because of a sudden surge in demand; inflation was the cause. Conversely, the 1997 jump in the price of some commodities was not related to the money supply, but to the fact that capacity was not keeping up, for a while, with demand.

Alan Greenspan by Roman Genn

Greenspan & Co. were also working themselves into a lather over the booming equities market. Greenspan's now-infamous "irrational exuberance" speech in 1996 was given when the Dow was around 6,400. The Fed does not have a mandate to guide the stock market, but Greenspan felt we were in danger of a bubble similar to the one the Japanese had experienced in the 1980s. For a long time, he was oblivious to the real and extraordinary technological breakthroughs being developed. The Fed has done to our economy, in a milder way, what the Bank of Japan's stringent monetary policy did to Japan's: starved it of sufficient credit.

Greenspan's recent rate cuts are not working, because the Fed still isn't creating enough credit to alleviate the economy's dehydration. It's like going to a gas station and finding that the price of fuel is lower, but the gas station won't sell you more than a gallon of gas at a time, and even that only once a month. You are still not going to drive very far, very fast.

After a decade, the Bank of Japan is finally reversing course and will start pumping yen into Japan's parched economy. The Fed should follow suit here. Forget about pegging interest rates; just give us enough fuel to get the American economy humming again. (A good gauge is the price of that much-maligned metal, gold. When it gets up to the $300–$325 level, breathe easier; the Fed is truly easing up.)

Another culprit is taxes. The political culture can never seem to accept this simple but basic truth: Taxes are a burden and a price. The taxes people pay on income, profits, and capital gains are the price they pay for working, for being successful, for being willing to take risks. America's very prosperity has pushed people into higher tax brackets, punishing and burdening them and decreasing their incentive to engage in further productivity. Moreover, millions of taxpayers are ruefully discovering that various deductions and tax credits are phased out when they exceed certain income levels. Millions are also getting hit with the Alternative Minimum Tax, designed 30 years ago to catch tax-dodging millionaires, but now crushing more and more middle-income taxpayers. Millions of Americans now run their businesses as sub-chapter S corporations, which means that their business income is taxed as personal income.

Other causes of the slowdown are excessive regulation—as the high-tech sector gets caught in the molasses-like regulatory structures afflicting the telephone, TV, radio, and cable industries—and an out-of-control plaintiff bar, which is now enacting taxation through litigation, starting with tobacco.

The immediate course of action is clear: If we ease money aggressively, cut taxes even more than President Bush has proposed, and make the tax cuts effective more quickly, the economy will pick itself up in no time. President Bush should beef up his tax package in the following specific ways: cutting the capital-gains tax to

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10 percent, abolishing the Alternative Minimum Tax, letting people contribute more to their Roth IRAs and their 401(k)s, permitting mutual-fund shareholders to defer capital-gains taxes until they actually sell their shares, removing the 3 percent Spanish–American War telephone tax, and extending the Internet tax moratorium.

No matter what we do, of course, hundreds of those dot-coms won't be resurrected. But the shareholders' pain over these failures need not result in any serious long-term harm to the economy. The doomsayers should remember that the booming 1980s—which actually had growth rates exceeding those of the 1990s—had major busts in energy and agriculture. Texas, Iowa, and other parts of the country were economic wastelands—but America, as a whole, prospered.

A lot of those dot-coms were flaky and will forever be featured in the chronicles of bubble historians. But their technology is awesomely real, and so-called Old Economy companies have used it to increase productivity enormously. General Electric alone will spend $16 billion online for procurement this year; the Internet is rapidly subsuming telephones, television, and radio; and Napster is a wake-up call to the music industry about its traditional distribution methods.

Players in any new technology often fall by the wayside. America's corporate graveyard has hundreds of headstones of automobile manufacturers. Remember when personal computers hit the scene in the 1980s? Atari, Commodore, and Texas Instruments ended up taking a huge hit. But the P.C. revolution—as Wang, Digital Equipment, and IBM (which nearly went broke in 1992) could testify—was genuine.

We have had spectacular stock-market drops before, without setting off another Great Depression. In the spring of 1962, equities experienced the severest one-day drop since the crash of 1929. But thanks to President Kennedy's sweeping across-the-board tax cuts (several times greater than those President Bush is proposing), a less antibusiness attitude in the White House, and a sensible Federal Reserve, the economy continued to grow with increasing "vigah." The 1987 crash, similarly, did not presage a depression.

Jeremiahs like to point accusatory fingers at the enormous growth of personal and corporate indebtedness, and the S&P 500's above-average price-earnings ratio. Some of that debt came from technology companies buying up their own stock and reissuing it in lieu of cash to their employees: In a healthy economy, that's a healthy thing to do. Many Americans are indeed over their heads in debt, but most—absent a bone-cracking recession—are not. The American people, moreover, have—in general—a remarkable ability to rebuild their balance sheets when they sense things are not going well. If sensible policies are pursued, their purse strings will loosen. Furthermore, price/earnings ratios have been trending upward for a century. With the Cold War won, inflation subdued, and a fantastic era of innovation unfolding, why shouldn't p/e ratios continue to improve?

Making the right choices now will make a huge difference for our economic future. The Great Depression was a worldwide disaster, and it was ushered in by the Smoot-Hawley Tariff—which destroyed world trade and the flow of capital. Herbert Hoover's incredibly poorly timed tax increase—which kicked in in 1932—exacerbated a bad situation; and Fed policy was—then as now—absolutely unconstructive.

Similarly, the miserable stagflation economy of the 1970s came about because of bad policy choices: The great inflation was unleashed by the destruction of the Bretton Woods gold-based monetary system, combined with the catastrophic tax increases that resulted when inflation pushed people into higher tax brackets. (This, by the way, was precisely why Ronald Reagan indexed the personal tax code to inflation; he wanted to prevent such unlegislated tax increases.) The doom and gloom of those malaise-ridden years seemed permanent—but when Reagan reversed those catastrophic errors, the American economy rapidly turned around.

If President Bush—both in public and behind the scenes—pushes the right policies, genuinely muscular and bold prescriptions for economic growth, the unpleasantness we are now experiencing will become a historical footnote. If he does not . . . **NR**

■ THE ECONOMY II ■

Beware the 'Lockbox'

A way into . . . yes, socialism

KEVIN HASSETT

ARE we being "lockboxed" into economic serfdom? The famous "lockbox" has acquired an exalted status unequaled by virtually any public policy in recent memory. Left and Right disagree about almost everything, but every prudent man and woman in Washington, it seems, supports the lockbox. The term itself has acquired such cachet that one might be forgiven for believing that it was invented by the Founding Fathers, if not the Biblical patriarchs.

In fact, the notion first gained political prominence very recently—in the late 1990s. It's easy to see the political appeal of the lockbox: It's really nothing more than a gentlemen's agreement to set aside certain funds for a specific purpose. If revenues are committed to a program, Democrats are pleased because a tax cut is thereby made less likely; and Republicans are happy as well, because Democrats can increase spending only if they can finance it with funds other than those designated for the lockbox. In practice, the lockbox is a rhetorical device—but the politicians have recently upped the ante. The House turned the rhetorical device into a bill, which it passed on February 13.

It's not clear that the lockbox will work; but if it does, it will be dangerous to the Republic—and Republicans will ultimately regret the day they began to support the concept. It poses a serious threat to the intellectual underpinnings of the free-market economy.

In the late 1940s, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and the other members of the Mont Pelerin Society set out

Mr. Hassett is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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to identify the principles that gird a free society. At the time, socialism was in its heyday. Socialists pursued absolute equality through government acquisition and management of private assets, and in many places they were beginning to achieve their objectives. Every Eastern European country was socialist, and many Western European nations were moving in that direction as well. Academe preached the inevitability of socialism, but Hayek and his colleagues boldly argued that a central planning agency would never be able to aggregate information efficiently—as prices do in a free-market economy. Over time, citizens would see that their brethren in capitalist countries were more prosperous, and popular support for socialism would disappear.

Of course, history sided with Hayek, but socialism *didn't* disappear. Economists and philosophers began to devise a socialism that would be immune to the Hayek critique. The cleverest of these scholars is John E. Roemer, a highly gifted academic at Yale University. In his 1994 book, *A Future for Socialism*, Roemer envisioned a world where the government would distribute coupons that entitle individuals to an equal share of corporate profits. Workers would own the means of production, but the capitalist system would otherwise be left to its own devices. Prices would continue to serve their allocative function, and the most damning weakness of 1940s socialism would thus be eliminated. While Roemer's work has received a significant amount of criticism and subsequent refinement, it is safe to say that the frontier of socialist thinking envisions a society very much like our own—except that the ownership of firms would be distributed by the government equally to citizens.

It is not alarmist to say that we are marching toward a world reminiscent of Roemer's vision—and that the Social Security lockbox is partly to blame.

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The lockbox gives the Democrats the power to filibuster us to market socialism.

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Here's why. The Social Security Administration currently takes in more in revenues than it spends. Rather than rebate the extra revenues to deserving taxpayers, our officials have chosen to put them in the lockbox. Each month, the Social Security Administration mails the money to the U.S. Treasury, which gives the Social Security Administration an IOU, and then searches for something to do with the money. So far, the Treasury has not had to think too hard about what to do, since there has been plenty of government debt to retire. But that will change: At the rate the government is vacuuming money out of the economy, there will—in just a few years—be no more government debt to retire. The Social Security shortfalls we have all heard about do not begin until far off in the future; so what will the government do with all those extra revenues?

Economists who have studied this problem generally agree that there's only one place where that much money can be spent: the stock market. At that point, the Treasury will have to begin purchasing stocks with the lockboxed surpluses, because the stock market is the only financial arena large and liquid enough to absorb trillions of dollars of capital. Even using conservative economic assumptions, it is easy to envision the U.S. government owning anywhere from a quarter to a half of all equities. Such investment could—in theory—be neutral, but there is a much greater likelihood that taxpayer dollars will wind up being invested in the equities of firms represented by well-connected figures of the Hugh Rodham type.

This vision of the government buying up the private economy might appear implausible, but—because of the lockbox—the Democrats now have the power to make it happen. The lockbox gives them the power to filibuster us to market socialism, and it's hard to see what incentive they would have not to exercise this power.

The only sure way to avert the massive acquisition of equities by the government is for Republicans to abandon their attachment to the lockbox and focus instead on tax reduction and Social Security privatization. The Democrats should not be allowed to avoid this fight: If they oppose tax cuts, they must be forced to tell us what they will do with all that money once the debt is retired. If they oppose Republican efforts to allow individuals to place their Social Security taxes in private accounts, let them explain why they would prefer that *the government* hold the investments.

A recent development in the socialist literature suggests that this debate—if the Democrats do not succeed in avoiding it—will go poorly for them. Louis Putterman, an economist at Brown University who contributes frequently to the socialist literature, has written an academic paper exploring the mechanism through which the ownership of capital would best be distributed to workers in a socialist society. He argues, persuasively, that workers should be allowed to own and trade stocks, and views this alternative as superior to the government ownership of assets because bureaucrats can't be trusted to seek out the investments with the highest economic return. In other words, the Democratic party—whose policy positions currently add up to the requirement that the government must eventually buy up a large fraction of the private economy—is now to the left of the socialists.

As Hayek and his colleagues taught us, private property is the foundation of a free society. The national Democratic party, it seems, no longer understands this—so the Republicans must make a point of insisting on it. **NR**

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■ THE ADMINISTRATION ■

Disbarred!

Bush throws the ABA out

BYRON YORK

"THERE'S constant chatter about it," says one Senate aide. "There's a real expectation about it," says another. "We think it will happen by the end of June," says a third.

The "it" to which so many on Capitol Hill are referring these days is the widely anticipated retirement of a Supreme Court justice, thought to be a sure bet when the Court's current term ends this summer. Who will go? Speculation centers on William Rehnquist and Sandra Day O'Connor, with Republicans expecting to-the-death confirmation fights as George W. Bush attempts to place young, solidly conservative judges on the Court.

Of course, Rehnquist and O'Connor might decide to stick around. A less sexy topic, but a much surer thing, is the fate of more than five dozen open seats on lower federal courts all across the country. According to the Senate Judiciary Committee, there are 25 unfilled seats on federal circuit courts of appeals. There are five openings on the mostly conservative Fourth Circuit alone, and another five on the Sixth Circuit, plus three each on the Fifth, Ninth, and Tenth circuits, and a few more scattered around elsewhere. In addition, there are 42 open seats in the lower federal district courts. Altogether, that's 67 judges to be appointed—right now.

Which means that whatever Rehnquist and O'Connor decide to do, there will still be plenty of confirmation battles in the first year of the Bush administration. The White House is already vetting dozens of candidates—several are now going through laborious FBI clearance investigations. And in February, White House counsel Alberto Gonzales sent out a letter that underscored how seriously the Bush administration views the judicial issue. It was addressed to Republican senators, who often take it upon themselves to promote home-staters for top federal judgeships. Gonzales's message: Thanks, but we'll handle the big ones all by ourselves. "With respect to vacancies on the United States Court of Appeals," the letter said, "the President intends to follow past practice and exercise substantial independent judgment and to make selections that he deems to be in the long-term best interests of each judicial circuit and of the nation as a whole." Says one approving Senate aide: "That's code for, 'We're gonna pick the most conservative person we can find.'"

All the early jockeying over judges was the subtext for another move from the Bush White House—the decision to end the American Bar Association's special role in the judicial selection process. Ever since the Eisenhower administration, the White House has given the ABA an advance look at the names of nominees. The association would then conduct an extensive examination of the record and reputation of the prospective judge. At the end of the process, which usually took several weeks, the ABA would give the candidate one of three ratings: "well qualified," "qualified," or "not qualified."

■

The Bush administration zeroed in on the ABA's Achilles heel: its long record of liberal activism.

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For years now—especially since Ronald Reagan took office—Republicans have complained about bias in the ABA's evaluations. In 1987, the GOP was infuriated when four members of the association's 15-member judicial selection committee rated Robert H. Bork—the former Yale law professor, solicitor general, and federal judge—"not qualified" to sit on the Supreme Court (ten members of the committee found him "well qualified," and one abstained).

Nor were Republicans happy with the ABA's treatment of lower-court nominees. They point to some distinguished GOP-appointed judges—Richard Posner, Laurence Silberman, and Frank Easterbrook, among others—who received lower ratings than distinguished Democratic-appointed judges like Abner Mikva, Patricia Wald, and Diane Wood. Why, for example, did Mikva receive a unanimous "well qualified" vote, while Posner—widely respected as one of the finest lawyers in the country—received a "qualified" vote, with at least one member voting "not qualified"? "You have to ask yourself, 'What does that say about the ABA's process?'" says Leonard Leo, who edits the *ABA Watch* newsletter published by the conservative Federalist Society. "These are judges who are among the brightest legal minds in America today, and they were viewed as split, qualified/not qualified, to serve on the federal bench."

But just how slanted were the ABA ratings? In its defense, the association points out that Antonin Scalia, William Rehnquist, and Anthony Kennedy all received unanimous "well qualified" votes from the committee. And the ABA says that since 1960, there have been only 26 candidates who were rated "not qualified." Eight of those came during the Kennedy administration, six during Johnson, one during Nixon, one during Ford, five during Carter, one during Reagan, none during George H. W. Bush, and four during Clinton. That's three Republican-nominated judges who have been judged "not qualified," against 23 Democratic-nominated judges—not exactly a clear-cut case of liberal bias.

So as much as the Bork affair rankled conservatives, it seems difficult to see how the White House could have rejected the ABA based simply on its record on Supreme Court and lower-court recommendations. Instead, the administration zeroed in on the association's real Achilles heel: its long record of liberal activism, often involving causes ranging far beyond its expertise.

In the last 15 years, the association has taken hundreds of high-profile positions on the hottest of hot-button issues: abortion (they're for it), the death penalty (against), affirmative action (for), tort reform (against), and the independent-counsel law (for it during the Reagan and Bush administrations, and against it during Clinton). And the ABA didn't stop there. Needle-

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exchange programs? They were for them. Welfare reform? Against. Gay adoption? For.

So the White House asked: Why should an organization that has chosen sides in so many partisan battles play a unique role in the supposedly nonpartisan evaluation of judicial nominees? And the answer was: It shouldn't. "It would be particularly inappropriate, in our view, to grant a preferential, quasi-official role to a group, such as the ABA, that takes public positions on divisive political, legal, and social issues that come before the courts," Alberto Gonzales wrote in a letter announcing that the White House had ended the association's special role in judicial selection.

■

The ABA will be just one of many groups that weigh in on nominations.

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The ABA's reaction was swift: It was the White House, not the association, that was politicizing the process. "We are concerned that politics may be taking the place of professionalism in the review," ABA president Martha Barnett said after the decision. Barnett and other ABA defenders said the association keeps the judicial selection committee's work scrupulously separate from the larger affairs of the ABA. "The committee has no bias," adds Jerome Shestack, who was on the committee during the 1980s and later became president of the ABA. "The members don't become politically active while they're on the committee."

But does that mean the members are without bias? Current chairman Patricia Hynes is one of the nation's leading plaintiff's lawyers, an overwhelmingly Democratic group, and in the 1990s, before she joined the committee, she contributed to the campaigns of Democrats Charles Schumer, Dianne Feinstein, Geraldine Ferraro, John Conyers, and others (she did not contribute to any Republicans). Laurel Bellows, another committee member, contributed to Carol Moseley-Braun, Richard Durbin, Patty Murray, Barbara Mikulski, and others (again, no Republicans). And Pauline Schneider, of the Washington, D.C., circuit, contributed to Bill Clinton, Charles Robb, and the Democratic National Committee (no Republicans).

On the other side, the committee includes sometime George W. Bush adviser Fred Fielding, who has contributed to many Republicans, including Bob Dole, George H. W. Bush, and Newt Gingrich. Another committee member, Harry Hardin, contributed to the Republican National Committee. But that's it for the GOP; in all, two of the committee's 15 members contributed solely to Republicans, compared with seven members who contributed solely to Democrats (the others either gave to both parties or did not contribute). Putting aside the issue of imbalance, few of the ABA's critics believe that so many politically active lawyers are able to leave their preferences at the door of the committee room.

Now the issue is moot. Barnett says the ABA will continue to evaluate judicial nominees, but after nominations are officially announced by the White House. At that point, the ABA will be just one of many groups—like NARAL or the Family Research Council—that weigh in on nominations. Which means that, when it comes to judges, George W. Bush will have one fewer headache as he enters what will likely be some of the toughest fights of his presidency. **NR**

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■ **THE ADMINISTRATION II** ■

Zing Along with Mitch

The Reaganite new budget chief

KATE O'BEIRNE

In the 19th century, the Secretary of War occupied a three-room suite on the second floor of what is now the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, adjacent to the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue. But since 1939, the ornate quarters have housed each administration's budget director, including such notables as George Shultz, Caspar Weinberger, Bert Lance, and David Stockman. It is now Mitch Daniels who cordially greets visitors to the offices of the director of the Office of Management and Budget, where he will be waging war against high taxes—and congressional spending binges—on behalf of a president whom Daniels describes as "resolute" in his determination to control federal spending. Mitch Daniels's own determination is underscored by his recognition that before the year is out, the administration could have a civil war on its hands with a spendthrift Republican Congress.

Returning to Washington from the corporate world in Indianapolis, Daniels feels like "a reservist called up for active duty," and his old conservative colleagues are delighted that President Bush sounded the call for this veteran of the Reagan White House. "Mitch's appointment is a total home run," in the opinion of Stephen Moore, who has left the Cato Institute to run the Club for Growth, a free-market advocacy group on whose board Daniels served along with Arthur Laffer, former Delaware governor Pete DuPont, NATIONAL REVIEW contributing editor Lawrence Kudlow, and NR president Thomas L. "Dusty" Rhodes. Daniels, says Moore, is "very much a supply-sider" and "as eloquent as anyone in the administration on tax cuts."

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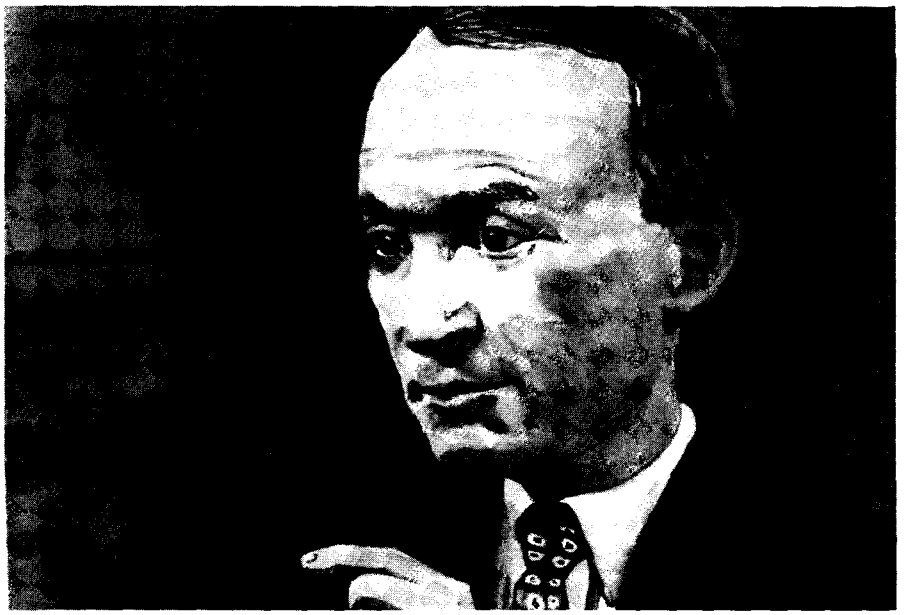
The new OMB director himself describes his political philosophy succinctly, varying only the modifiers: "I'm a Reagan conservative, I'm a Lugar conservative, I'm a Bush conservative." He is now in unfriendly territory, and acquitting himself well. On a recent Sunday-morning TV show, Daniels made the case for the president's budget agenda, in a match-up with Sen. Joe Lieberman. When challenged on whether Bush's pessimism about the economy was intended to build support for his tax cut, Daniels replied, "Well, that would be a pretty good reason, by the way," and pointed out the historically high level of income taxes. When asked about the administration's view of a proposed "trigger" to halt tax cuts if the surplus shrinks, Daniels called the idea—promoted by some GOP senators—unnecessary and unwise, noted that taxpayers' interests always seem to come last, and wondered why there was no mechanism to slow spending in the face of an economic downturn.

Former congressman David McIntosh, an Indiana Republican, credits Daniels—"one of the smartest people I've ever met"—with the fact that Washington's current budget debate so favors Republicans. He points out that Daniels, who cochaired McIntosh's unsuccessful campaign for governor last year, put together a budget for the president that supported his tax cuts without making the kind of program cuts that would provide Democrats with ammunition against the plan.

As a veteran GOP political strategist, Daniels has engaged in most of Washington's major debates over the last few decades. Following his 1971 graduation from Princeton, he returned home to Indianapolis to work for Mayor Richard Lugar. After Lugar's 1976 election to the Senate, Daniels joined him in Washington, where he became the senator's chief of staff, and finished his law degree at Georgetown University. During the 1984 election cycle, Daniels ran the Republican Senate campaign committee, and then served in the Reagan White House, first as liaison to state and local officials, and later as political director.

In Daniels's view, Reagan was the kind of great political leader who, in



Mitch Daniels by John T. Ward

Disraeli's words, "knew himself and knew his times." He talks about Reagan's "sunny disposition, his resolution, and his unwavering concentration on the big issues." Here, he sees some similarities with his current boss: "President Bush has a superb balance in terms of management style. He's very engaged with the things that matter, but he will not be distracted by the trivial." The "Hoosier modesty" his friends attribute to Daniels shows itself in his respect for the president's busy schedule: He has a private meeting reserved

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on Bush's calendar weekly, but doesn't always use it because "I'm not one to take his time just to see my smiling face."

Getting caught up in the fine points of the budget is a workplace hazard at the OMB, and it caused some of Daniels's predecessors—notably David Stockman—to lose sight of major policy goals. Those who know Mitch Daniels see little chance of that happening to him: Despite his long years of political experience, Daniels has more claim than most to the coveted titles of "Beltway outsider" and "big-picture thinker." He left Washington in 1987 to run the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis. Leslie Lenkowsky, who took over the conservative think tank from Daniels in 1990, explains that Daniels is a voracious reader and "a bit of a futurist" who has always been interested in big ideas.

■

Daniels was drawn back to Washington by this president, and the Republicans' opportunity to govern.

■

For the past ten years, while a senior vice president for the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company, Daniels remained engaged in public policy at both national and local levels—serving on the boards of the conservative Bradley Foundation and the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation. He also worked with Indianapolis mayor Steve Goldsmith's task force on deregulation, and joined with minority community activists to help create a school devoted to "academic excellence and racial reconciliation" in Indiana's capital—a school whose success would be a reproach to the education bureaucrats. (Daniels explains that he's "lighting one little candle" for the 150 students at the school.)

In his commitment to the importance of public policy, Daniels has been willing to be unsparing of himself. In 1989, he wrote an op-ed for the *Washington Post* entitled "Bennett Knows Best," calling for the enforcement of drug laws against even casual users—and disclosing his own undergraduate arrest, detention, and fine for marijuana use. He shrugs off his uncommon willingness to publicly reveal the transgression he describes as "my big lesson in personal responsibility," because he views the disclosure as a way to make a serious argument.

Friends who predict a political future in Indiana for Daniels were surprised that he decided to return to Washington, but Daniels explains that he was drawn by this president, whom he had met only a few times, and the Republicans' opportunity to govern. "I've been waiting," he says, "for a Republican to go toe to toe with powerful opponents about whose policies are superior for the least advantaged in society." His family will remain in Indiana so the youngest of his four daughters can finish high school there.

In a recent meeting with Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee, Daniels was told how difficult it will be for Congress to draw the line at 4 percent growth in discretionary spending—a target on which the president insists. According to an administration aide, the White House intends to help like-minded lawmakers by providing "constant downward pressure" on spending. Hill conservatives and OMB staff alike are convinced that Daniels would recommend a veto of spending bills out of line with the administration's goal of fiscal discipline. Daniels himself avoids the V-word, but firmly insists that the president's budget is realistic, and that Congress should be able to "scrimp along on an extra $103 billion this year."

Steve Moore is convinced that Daniels will, and must, take on the big spenders in the Republican party. "I've been convinced that spending will go up faster under Bush than Clinton because of these surpluses. The White House will have to give Tom DeLay the ability to tell his members, 'I can't send this to the White House, they'll veto it unless you take out some of this pork.'" As far as Daniels is concerned, there's no need to contemplate vetoes, "if Republicans here in Washington act as a governing party.

"The president is practical," says Daniels, "but he's very resolute about spending, and he has ways of getting that across." **NR**

■ THE NATION ■

Don't Box Me In

An end to racial checkoffs

WARD CONNERLY

A FEW weeks ago, I was having dinner with a group of supporters following a lecture. One of those in attendance was a delightful woman who applauded my efforts to achieve a colorblind government. She strongly urged me to stay the course, promised financial support for my organization—the American Civil Rights Institute—and proclaimed that what we are doing is best for the nation.

Then, an odd moment occurred, when she said, "What you're doing is also best for your people." I flinched, took a couple of bites of my salad, and gathered my thoughts. I thought: *"My people"? Anyone who knows me knows that I abhor this mindset. But this dear lady doesn't know all my views or the nuances of race. She has innocently wandered into a racial thicket and doesn't have a clue that she has just tapped a raw nerve. Do I risk offending her by opening this issue for discussion? Do I risk losing her financial support by evidencing my distaste for what she has said? Perhaps it would be best to ignore the moment and let my staff follow up in pursuit of her support.*

I concluded that the situation demanded more of me than to believe that she was incapable of understanding what troubled me about her comment. So, I did what comes naturally in such situations—I politely confronted her. "What did you mean when you referred to 'my people' a moment ago?" I asked. "The black race," she responded. "What is your 'race'?" I asked. She said, "I'm Irish

Mr. Connerly is founder and chairman of the American Civil Rights Institute and author of *Creating Equal: My Fight Against Race Preferences.*

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and German." I plowed ahead. "Would it affect your concept of my 'race' if I told you that one of my grandparents was Irish and American Indian, another French Canadian, another of African descent, and the other Irish? Aren't they all 'my people'? What about my children? They consist of my ingredients as well as those of their mother, who is Irish. What about my grandchildren, two of whom have a mother who is half Vietnamese?" The lady was initially awestruck. But that exchange produced one of the richest conversations about race I have ever had.

■

A great number of people are beginning to wonder about this business of their 'race.'

■

This discussion is one that an increasing number of Americans are having across our nation. It is one that many more would *like* to have. Thanks to the race questions placed in the 2000 Census, a great number of people are beginning to wonder about this business of their "race."

From its inception, America has promised equal justice before the law. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution stand as monuments to the Founders' belief that we can fashion a government of colorblind laws, a unified nation without divisible parts. Unfortunately, they had to compromise on that vision from the beginning. To create a government, they had to protect the international slave trade until 1808. After that time, with the slave trade forever banned, they hoped and believed the slave system would wither away.

In a second concession of their principles to material interests, the Founders also agreed to count slaves as only three-fifths of a person. This compromise stemmed not from a belief that slaves were less than human; rather, slaveowning states wanted to count slaves as whole persons in deciding how large their population was, but not count them at all in deciding how much the states would pay in taxes. The infamous three-fifths compromise was the unfortunate concession.

To distinguish slaves from non-slaves, governments established various race classifications. Unfortunately, these classifications continued long after the Civil War amendments formally repudiated them. After all, once everyone was free to enjoy all the privileges and immunities of American citizenship, there was no longer a need to classify people by race. In hindsight, we recognize that, after nearly a century of race classifications imposed by the state, these classifications had become part of the way average Americans saw themselves, as well as others. Over the next half-century, scientists began to recognize that these race classifications don't exist in nature. We had created them, to justify an inhuman system.

Even as science reached these conclusions, however, these classifications played ever more important roles in American life. Poll taxes and literacy tests; separate bathroom facilities, transportation, water fountains, neighborhoods—the entire Jim Crow system relied on these state-imposed race classifications. And with science unable to distinguish a black person from a non-black person, the government relied on the infamous "one-drop rule": If you have just one drop of "black blood," you're black.

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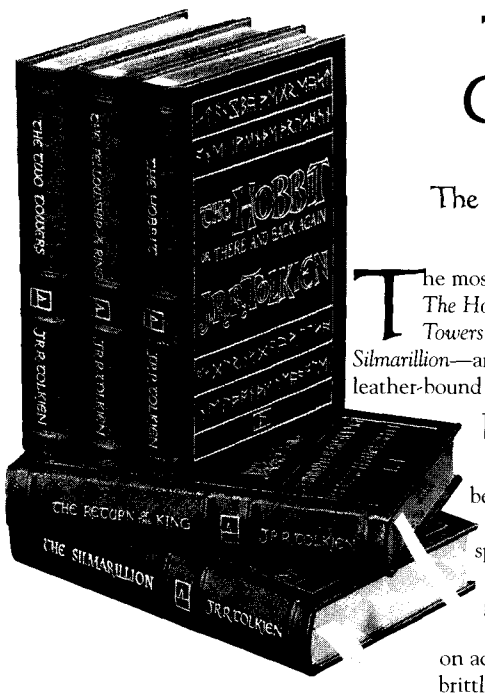

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Although the Supreme Court struck down the "separate but equal" legal structure, the Court failed to eliminate the race classifications that sustained all the forms of segregation and discrimination the Court was trying to eliminate. We have seen the actual expansion of the groups being classified. On some level, though, I'm sure we really do want to become "one nation . . . indivisible." Witness the tenfold increase in "multiracial" families since 1967. In its decision that year—aptly named *Loving* v. *Virginia*—the Supreme Court ruled that anti-miscegenation laws (those forbidding people of different races to marry) were unconstitutional. While it took some time for us to shed the taboos against interracial dating and marriage, today there are more "multiracial" children born in California than there are "black" children. When Benjamin Bratt and Julia Roberts began dating, no one cared that they were an interracial couple. So too with Maury Povich and Connie Chung. Love has become colorblind.

The time has come for America to fulfill the promise of equal justice before the law and for the nation to renounce race classifications. To that end, I am preparing to place the Racial Privacy Initiative (RPI) before California voters on the March 2002 ballot. This initiative would prohibit governments in California from classifying individuals by race, color, ethnicity, or national origin. Much to my surprise, just submitting RPI to the state in preparation for gathering signatures has generated controversy. The American Civil Liberties Union has called it a "racist" initiative, and various proponents of race preferences have said it will "turn back the clock on civil rights."

In drafting RPI, we have exempted medical research and have proposed nothing that would prevent law-enforcement officers from identifying particular individuals, so long as those methods are already lawful. To guarantee that laws against discrimination are enforced, we have exempted the Department of Fair Employment and Housing from the provisions of RPI for ten years.

Getting the government out of the business of classifying its citizens and asking them to check these silly little race boxes represents the next step in our nation's long journey toward becoming one nation. Getting rid of these boxes will strike a blow against the overbearing race industry that has grown like Topsy in America. It will help free us from the costly and poisonous identity politics and the racial spoils system that define our political process. It will clip the wings of a government that has become so intrusive that it classifies its citizens on the basis of race, even when citizens "decline to state." Enacting the Racial Privacy Initiative is the most significant step we can take to bring Americans together.

I ask all Americans who share the goal of a united America to join in this endeavor to fulfill our Founders' promise of colorblind justice before the law. For my part, I just don't want to be boxed in. **NR**

By Roman Genn

■ THE NATION II ■

Guilt and Guts

The American political arena as vegetarian restaurant

ROB LONG

In the spring of 1992, the day after the Los Angeles riots, I went down to South Central L.A. with a group of friends to help clean up. In our jeans and hiking boots and T-shirts emblazoned with progressive slogans, we spent the day piling rubble and ash into curbside mounds and bagging litter. The litter, of course, wasn't strictly related to the Rodney King verdict, but it was there, and so were we, and there really wasn't that much we could do anyway, but we were in our twenties, and had never been to that part of Los Angeles before, and we had plastic bags, so . . . connect the dots.

■

I had been to this restaurant many times before, and had always felt vaguely uncomfortable.

■

After a desultory morning raking and bagging and piling, we all went out to a vegetarian restaurant in Hollywood for brunch. I had been to this restaurant many times before, and had always felt vaguely uncomfortable. It was your classic progressive-newspaper-reading, nose-ring-wearing, irritating-political-nonsense-spouting crowd. It was the kind of place that someone with my far-right-wing beliefs (a lower top-income-tax rate spurs economic growth; the public-school system needs serious reform; America must maintain a strong military to deter our enemies) feels instantly uncomfortable in.

But that day, sweaty and tired from

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three hours of "helping bring the city back together," my jeans and T-shirt dirty from "healing Los Angeles," I felt something I'd never felt before in that restaurant. I felt morally superior. I had, after all, just engaged in do-gooderism while the rest of the selfish louts had been tucking into their soy frittatas and bulghur pancakes. The waitress may proclaim that "Hate Is Not A Family Value" all she likes from the comfort of the bumper of her dad's old Saab, but, sweetheart, I lived it. See this scuff on my hiking boots? See this red mark on my hand? Got them when I accidentally dropped my shovel, cleaning up after the riots. I wish I had time to lounge around here, reading the *LA Weekly* and sipping Red Zinger tea like some people, but I guess I just care too damn much.

I'd spent, maybe, two hours dragging my tiny shovel along West Adams Boulevard. Actually, less than two hours: I spent a lot of that time talking to a girl who had just come back from a bike trip through Vietnam. I did, basically, nothing. We did, as a group, basically, nothing. We "cleaned up" only in the teenager sense of "cleaning up," i.e., forming distinct piles of stuff for someone else to actually clean up. And yet here I was, puffed up and proud, swanning through a vegetarian restaurant on La Brea Boulevard.

In the arena? The now-infamous spot on La Brea Avenue

Think of the American political arena, if you will, as this vegetarian restaurant. At each table sits a piece of the power puzzle—the *New York Times*, say, digging into its black-bean soup; over there, the NAACP ordering the maple smoothie; Tom Brokaw sits in his Teva sandals and Zapatista T-shirt flipping through an issue of *Healing Bodywork* magazine; Hillary Clinton as the humorless waitress. And in walks—oh, just for argument's sake—Newt Gingrich.

Now what, exactly, are Newt's chances here?

I know we shouldn't feel defensive just because we're in favor of school choice, low taxes, a strong military, and truly equal opportunity for all, but somehow, seated at a table in the vegetarian restaurant of American politics, we instinctively do. It's natural, I suppose, for anyone who's outnumbered to feel defensive and surrounded. Liberals are fragile, sensitive people. Like all fragile types, their best defense is a preemptive first strike. That was Bill Clinton's not-so-secret strategy, and it's what the teachers unions, the earth-firsters, and the welfare-staters have been doing successfully for years. Anyone who has lots of liberal friends—that is, anyone who lives in the infamous "blue" areas of the country, as depicted in the election-night maps on every network—knows firsthand about the relentless peppering of tiny pokes and prods liberals use in a political argument. The first-strike strategy they use in any debate is to force the hardworking American conservative to defend, essentially, his moral compass—"Why do you want children to starve?" "Why do you want to shut down the school system?" "Why do you want us all to die of skin cancer caused by an insufficient ozone layer?" "What's so great about selfishness?"—which, after a decade or two, creates a divided conservative population: the quiet, head-down Republican ("I'd appreciate a tax cut, sir, but I understand if one is not available") and the loutish, go-to-hell conservative ("Hillary killed Vince Foster with her bare hands").

Following the Vegetarian Restaurant Principle, a small dose of moral superiority (as small, apparently, as "I raked up cardboard this morning and you didn't") tips the center of gravity in any political struggle. And a large dose upends it altogether: When Ted Forstmann, billionaire merchant banker, offers millions of dollars in scholarships to children caught in failed schools, he transforms the entire school-choice debate in an instant, jujitsu-style.

Which brings me back to that April morning, nine years ago, as my fellow Gen-Xers and I made a series of pointless piles by the side of a road in the middle of a terrible neighborhood. I'm sure most of us wanted to "help," whatever that means, but I think that what a lot of us wanted to do was participate in

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a collective urban experience. Except that the Los Angeles riots weren't a collective experience at all: They were almost exclusively limited to blacks and Koreans, with a few unlucky firemen and truck drivers thrown in. White kids in their twenties with "Dukakis-Bentsen" T-shirts and $200 hiking boots were out of harm's way, as was their IKEA furniture and their interesting wall hangings brought back from their post-college trip through Asia.

■

This is liberalism in a nutshell: pointless, smug, irrelevant, ineffective, and, worse, meatless.

■

Inoculated by my scuffed shoes and slightly raw hand, I felt emboldened to bring this to the attention of my table. I launched the preemptory first strike. We had all participated in a sham, I said, that perfectly encapsulated thirty years of failed liberal urban policy. We spent a couple of hours cleaning up a neighborhood befouled by its own residents, euphemized a crime and murder spree as "civil unrest," ignored the devastation wrought upon Asian-American businesses because it clashed with our white-vs.-black obsession, and were now sitting in an all-white vegetarian restaurant in a hip part of town satisfied with ourselves. This, I summed up, is liberalism in a nutshell: pointless, smug, irrelevant, ineffective, and, worse, meatless.

I didn't change anyone's mind, of course. We were all pretty young, and truly conservative politics tend to follow larger paychecks and hungry children. But for once, they were on the defensive, and I was on the attack. For a brief, shining moment, in the middle of a vegetarian restaurant, it was the vegetarians who had to defend themselves. The only person who was truly offended was the extremely attractive girl who organized the whole day. She didn't talk to me again. Which was too bad, because she was the only reason I bothered to go down there in the first place.

Didn't I mention that? **NR**

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Is This All We Can Be?

The military culture and its cheapening

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

YOU may have seen the following TV spot: A soldier is running alone across the desert, carrying a backpack but no rifle. Helicopters swoop overhead. A squad of soldiers runs past, moving in the direction *opposite* that of the lone runner. Voiceover: "Even though there are 1,045,690 soldiers like me, I am my own force. . . . The might of the U.S. Army doesn't lie in numbers. It lies in me. I am an Army of One."

To anyone with the slightest acquaintance with military life, this recruiting ad is very peculiar indeed. One of the most fundamental truths about soldiering is that, with a few partial exceptions like snipers, a single warrior acting alone is of very little use to the cause he is fighting for. Ground warfare is carried on by *units*, of which the smallest that has much practical value is the platoon.

A great deal of military training is directed towards creating and maintaining unit cohesion. Parade-ground drill, for example—marching, turning, and manipulating weapons in formation—which seems very pointless when you first have to do it, is designed to make you understand that the very movements of your body belong to a larger organism: the squad, the platoon, the company. *An Army of One?* How is that supposed to work? Seeing that solitary soldier being an "army of one" out on his own in the desert, I could hear the voice of my own sergeant-instructor roaring: "GET BACK TO YOUR UNIT, SOLDIER!" (I have omitted an adjective or two.)

For more than 20 years, the principal recruiting slogan of the U.S. Army was "Be all you can be," which the trade journal *Advertising Age* ranked as second on its list of "Top Ten Jingles of the Century," after the McDonald's line "You deserve a break today." I had always thought "Be all you can be" about as far as military recruiters could reasonably go to accommodate the sensibilities of a narcissistic age without completely taking leave of reality. The slogan tells you that you can develop yourself—your skills, your character—while not excluding the possibility that you might do this by submerging your individual personality in something larger. Why drop this successful slogan?

I headed off to my local Army recruiting office to ask them. Hearing that I was a magazine writer, the desk sergeant laughed nervously, broke eye contact, and told me the Army had an excellent press office to handle that sort of thing. He commenced to write down their phone number for me. But I nagged him about "Army of One." Did he, obviously a soldier of many years' service—he was in his mid-thirties—really think it an honest message to put out for the purpose of attracting recruits into what is, after all, by definition and necessity, an extremely regimented organization? The sergeant allowed that he might not have chosen the slogan himself, if asked, but added: "It's addressed to young people, people a lot younger than me. *I* don't know how they think. The service depends on professionals to tell them that kind of stuff. You know, Madison Avenue types. They do surveys, they do focus groups, they come up with a slogan. They give it to me, I work with it." Fair enough.

The other services are revamping their recruiting material, too. The Navy wants to "Accelerate Your Life," having dropped its four-year-old slogan: "Let the journey begin" as being too wounding to the self-esteem of prospective sailors, who feel, at age 17 or so, that their journey is already well begun. The Air Force is still taking presentations from advertising agencies, hoping to roll out its own new campaign this summer. The Marines have long since stopped asking for "a few good men." That, of course, was "exclusionary"—what about women? So now young people are invited to join: "The few. The proud. The Marines."

As that recruiting sergeant explained, the armed services of today get their slogans the same way our political parties get their platforms: surveys, focus groups. In the Army's case the research work was done by a Chicago agency, Leo Burnett U.S.A. They learned that young people aged 14 to 24 see military culture as a threat to their own individuality, and military training—hollering drill instructors, push-ups in the

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mud, jumping out of planes—as scary. Now, you may say that you could have told the ad people this for nothing. You might add that military culture exists precisely to mold youngsters to its norms, not to adapt itself to theirs. You might further observe that it is precisely the fear and challenge of arduous training that lures many young people into the military life.

That last observation, while true, is unfortunately not true enough for a modern society. If you identify all those young Americans who thrill at the idea of organized combat—of killing people, blowing things up, and facing great bodily risks in the service of their country—you will find that you have about half a million of them, practically all young men. You are then faced with three problems: One, this is not enough to supply the country's defense needs, as currently defined; two, not many of your recruits are willing to do the ancillary tasks an army depends on (cooking, construction, dentistry, accounting, recruiting, and so on); and three, politically powerful lobbies—feminists, homosexuals, even the disabled—will be enraged that the force you have assembled does not look sufficiently like America.

Hence the surveys and the focus groups. It is easy to poke fun at these New Age recruiting slogans, and to observe that they are not likely to attract warrior spirits. The fact is that the fiercer kinds of warrior spirits will find their way into the services whatever you do. Elite units like the U.S. Marines are the ones with the fewest problems meeting their recruiting goals. It is the less glamorous service arms that are in trouble. In 1999 the Army had one of its worst-ever recruiting deficits, falling short of its 74,500 goal by 8.4 percent. Goals were met in 2000, but only by the offer of lavish sign-up bonuses and college-financing programs. If recruiting ads are un-warriorly, it is because true-born warriors do not need much recruiting.

REMEMBERING THE WARRIORS

The temptation here, to which the service chiefs have unfortunately succumbed, is to take the warriors for granted and concentrate all efforts on bringing in those others (who can, of course, through appropriate training, acquire enough of the warrior spirit to be useful in battle). It has been all the easier to take the elite combat units for granted because these are the very units whose services, in peacetime, are least required. An army, a navy, or an air force must be many things, but one of the things it cannot help being is a bureaucracy. Bureaucracies need to keep themselves up and running, and to do that, the clerks and quartermasters and cooks and computer programmers are essential. The pure warriors are, in peacetime, not essential.

A good example of this misdirected attention has been the recent controversy over berets. Last October, U.S. Army chief of staff general Eric Shinseki announced the issue of black berets to all soldiers in the Army, effective June 14, 2001. Until now, the only soldiers wearing a black beret have been the elite 75th Ranger Regiment. To earn that Ranger beret you have to volunteer at least three times—for the Army, for airborne, and for the Rangers. Then you must complete three weeks of very punishing training, with forced marches, live-fire obstacle courses, and hand-to-hand fighting. That is the point: The beret is *earned*. Other elite units also have distinctive berets. The Special Forces wear a green beret, made famous by that John Wayne movie. Paratroopers

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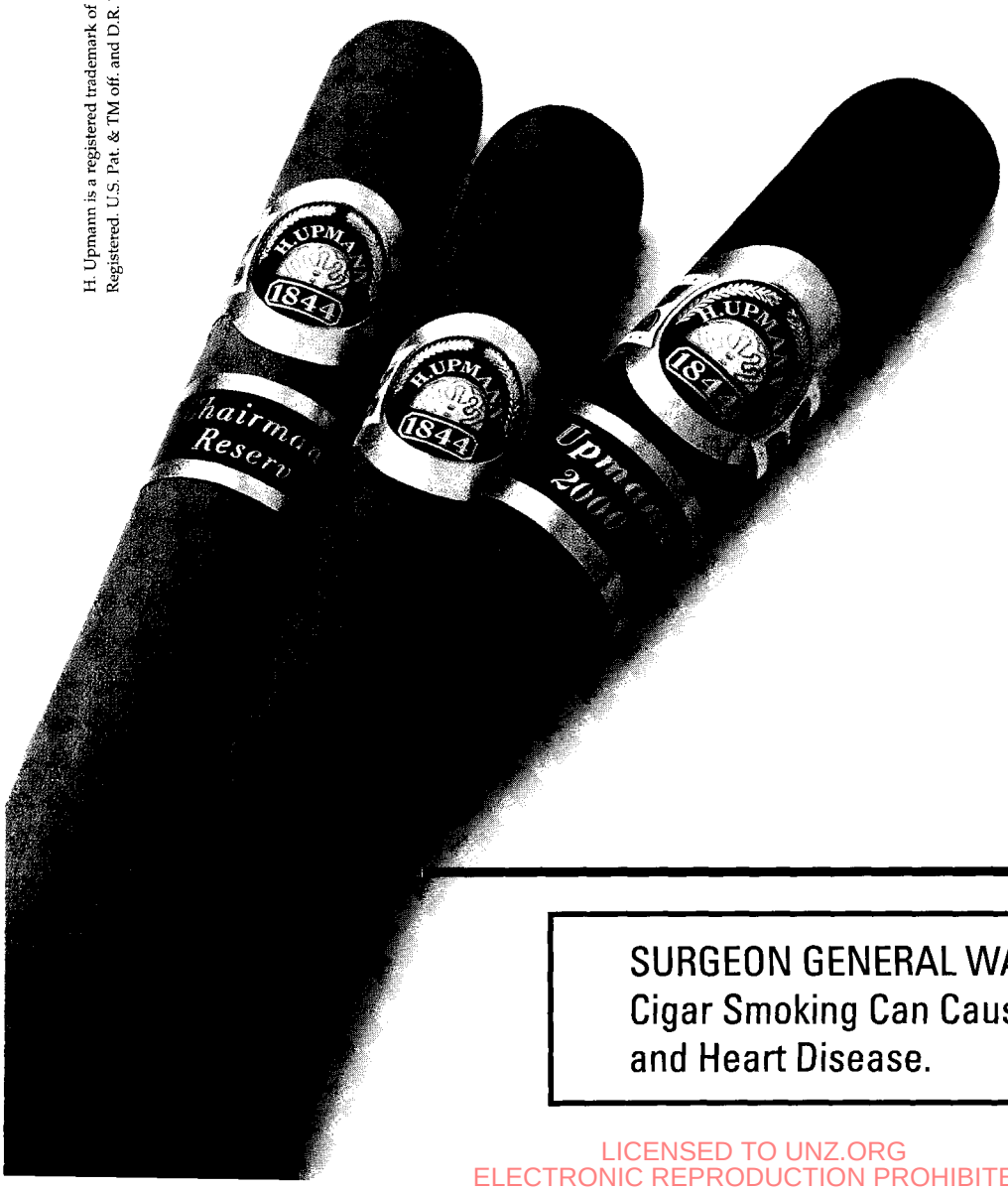

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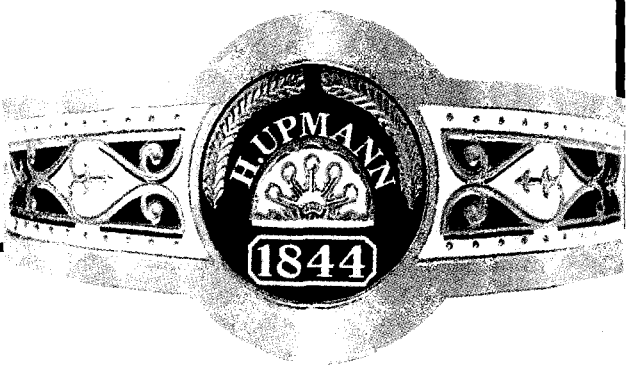

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have a maroon beret. Berets, in the U.S. armed services, mark out the warrior elites.

Shinseki's announcement let loose a storm of outrage. Thousands of letters, e-mails, and phone calls poured into the Pentagon from around the country. In February, two retired Rangers marched the 700 miles from Fort Benning, Ga., to Washington, to petition George W. Bush for presidential intervention. It has not helped that, in order to meet the June 14 deadline, manufacture of the new general-issue berets has been farmed out to factories in several Third World countries: 300,000 of them are to be made in Communist China! The Army's response to this storm has been a plan to have *all* personnel earn this new beret—by passing a written exam in Army history.

■

The hemorrhaging of trained personnel is a symptom of the great crisis in morale that overwhelmed the military in the 1990s.

■

The problem with taking real fighting skills for granted is that by doing so, you affect numbers as surely as you do when you fail to meet recruiting targets. Those responsible for keeping up military numbers must look not only at recruiting, but also at retention. Here things are desperate, though of course the services are reluctant to talk about it. A survey done in April 2000 showed that young captains are leaving the Army in droves after five to ten years—a very bad sign, as this is a key rank on the promotion ladder. Once you have made captain, the door is open to real command opportunities. To resign at this point, you need to have really strong negative feelings about the service. So they do: While routine grumbles about pay and conditions featured in the survey, bitter criticism of Army leadership was more common, most especially of the leadership's diluting or denying of a true soldierly ethos.

Retention problems are acute in the other services, for the same reasons. Stephanie Gutmann, in her 2000 book, *The Kinder, Gentler Military* (a must-read in this context, by the way), reports that schools for U.S. Navy flight instructors are known informally as "American Airlines U," because of the speed with which fliers quit the service for jobs with commercial airlines after receiving their million-dollar training. In another striking passage, Gutmann analyzes a survey done by the Navy in 1998, to find out how many sailors were planning to leave the service, and why. The results make it clear that personal and economic reasons for wanting to leave the service were dwarfed by dissatisfaction with the change in military culture and lack of confidence in military leadership.

This hemorrhaging of trained personnel is, like those feeble and dishonest advertising campaigns, a symptom of the great crisis in morale that overwhelmed the American military in the 1990s. Much of the blame for that crisis must, of course, be placed on the Clinton administration, who put the U.S. military in the hands of, and under the scrutiny of, politicians who were not merely militarily illiterate, but, in many cases, actually hostile to military values. It is not all Clinton's fault, however. The preposterous *Tailhook* witch hunt, for example, started up under the first Bush administration.

Taking an even wider view, some degree of military decline is inevitable in a long peace. The Anglo-Saxon nations especially have always had a problem taking military affairs seriously, except when the nation is in danger. The British held down a mighty empire with an all-volunteer army, whose common soldiers were regarded, in their own country, as beyond the pale of civilized society, a state of affairs famously captured by Kipling in his poem "Tommy": "I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer, / The publican 'e up an' sez, 'We serve no red-coats here . . .'"

In the first part of his novel *Coming up for Air*, which is a thinly disguised memoir of his own childhood in the years before WWI, George Orwell describes the reactions of people in a small English country town on hearing that a certain young man had "listed for a soldier"—that is, enlisted: "'Just think of it! A fine young fellow like that!' It just shocked them. Listing for a soldier, in their eyes, was the exact equivalent of a girl's going on the streets."

The United States, too, has usually preferred not to think about military matters unless it was absolutely necessary to do so. Following WWI, demilitarization was rapid and almost total. To read about the careers of American military men—Douglas MacArthur, for example—in the 1920s and 1930s is very depressing. The utter indifference to military innovation of the U.S. public, their elected representatives, and even the service chiefs themselves was demonstrated in 1925 by the Billy Mitchell affair (of which quite a good movie was made, with Gary Cooper). Korea and the Cold War postponed this psychological demilitarization after WWII, but it has now set in with a vengeance.

We are by no means back to Kipling's England yet. Americans express a high degree of admiration for the services when polled, and recent years have seen several successful war movies—*The Thin Red Line*, *Saving Private Ryan*, etc. This is an abstract, voyeuristic appreciation, though, not a participatory one. A better index of how comfortable we are with the arts of war is the entertainment medium we let into our homes, TV, from which military sitcoms have now disappeared.

The military are acutely aware of the public mood. Mention *Saving Private Ryan* and they whip back at you with the demented ex-military psychos in *American Beauty* and *Dead Poets' Society*, or the apparently bottomless appetite of the public for movies in which clever lawyers outwit secretive, unimaginative military professionals: *The General's Daughter*, *A Few Good Men*, etc. The significance of the Clinton presidency, to military people, was not so much that the title "commander in chief" was for eight years held by the most unmilitary human being this side of Tiny Tim, but that the American people, knowing what they knew, *elected and reelected* that person. No wonder the military feels unloved: "Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep / Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap."

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UP TO BUSH

With a new administration in Washington, there is hope that some of the problems of the last few years will at least be squarely faced, and perhaps fixed. Most fundamentally, the word must go out that the services will no longer be used as a theater for peacetime social engineering. That is not what they are for. As British general Sir Charles Guthrie remarked, on retiring from that country's General Staff early this year: "The duty of the chiefs of staff [is] to keep the best forces for when times are really terrible. The job is not to structure forces for the good times. You can't have two structures: one for good times and one for bad."

In particular, the administration needs to recognize that many of the ideologically driven sex-integration efforts of the 1990s were mistaken, and destructive of military culture, and should be rolled back. Of course, this is much more easily said than done. The United States has not ceased to have a feminist movement, and that movement's desire to assault the "patriarchy" in its last bastion has not diminished. Nor has the nation ceased to have a litigation industry, ever vigilant for the opportunity to turn ideology into cold cash. (*Tailhook* victim Paula Coughlin got $5.2 million.)

We have the advantage, however, that many of the things that were just proposals ten years ago have now been tried, and the results widely publicized. No reasonable person today can deny that coed basic training is possible only with drastically lowered standards; nor that if men and women are put together in the same units, or on the same ships, a lot of sexual activity will result; nor that unit cohesion, without which no military mission can be carried out, is seriously degraded by the presence of open sexual tensions. I believe the public and their representatives in Congress are much readier now than in the 1990s to accept some firm defense of traditional military culture.

As a beginning, I suggest that the administration lay down three markers without further delay. First, scotch the rumors that women are to be allowed to serve in the infantry. Women never have been admitted to this branch of the service, and the infantry training center at Fort Benning currently has no women on staff. Let those things stand. Second, firmly rule out the admission of women to submarine duty. The interior of a submarine is a very tiny, very crowded space, in which the adjustments necessary to accommodate female crew, as disruptive as they have been on surface warships, would be magnified a hundredfold. Third, fire Gen. Shinseki and rescind the beret order.

And if you will indulge me a final point: I believe the much-discussed rift between the military and the rest of society might be closed a little by allocating more resources to Junior ROTC. Many American parents, now that we have come through to the other side of Francis Fukuyama's "Great Disruption"—the upheavals in personal and social morality that occurred from about 1965 to 1990—would welcome the opportunities for structure, challenge, and character training offered to their children by the military. If more young people could enjoy those opportunities, the military and its values, which are among the indispensable core values of any civilized society, could be knitted back into the common culture, for the enrichment of all. **NR**

Lefty Nation?

What the trends portend

RAMESH PONNURU

ABOUT a year ago, John Judis, a left-liberal journalist at *The New Republic*, wrote an article arguing that a new Democratic majority was aborning and that the election of George W. Bush as president would only "delay this trend." It seemed absurd at the time: Judis was suggesting that even if Republicans started 2001 with both houses of Congress, the White House, and most of the nation's governors, they were still doomed. The election results, however, made his thesis look a lot less silly. Maybe even prescient.

Al Gore and Ralph Nader got 51 percent of the vote between them, the best showing for left-of-center candidates since 1964. In the Senate, a slew of conservative Republicans lost seats (Abraham, Ashcroft, Grams), and liberal Democrats won them (Hillary Clinton, Dayton, Corzine). For the third time in a row, Republican numbers in the House fell.

All of this has emboldened liberals. They draw further encouragement from demographic trends that they think are working in their favor. Judis argues that the McGovern coalition—minorities and affluent social liberals—is growing and, combined with labor, will make for "an enduring political majority." Ruy Teixeira, another liberal writer, says that Republicans are doing well in parts of the country that are in decline, such as West Virginia, rather than high-tech centers. Their strategy, he says, is "to round up some of the backward areas of the country and draw on sentiments that I think are on the way out."

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Pat Reddy, a consultant for the California Democrats, thinks that his party will become the dominant one because of the growth of three groups with an interest in larger government: immigrants, the elderly, and single women. He writes, "The statistic that should scare Republicans is that if every close statewide race in California over the last 40 years were rerun under today's ethnic line-up, the Democrats would win all of them based on a greatly expanded Hispanic/Asian vote. By 2008, we'll be able to say the same thing about national elections."

■

The parties are at parity, and it's awfully difficult to see which has the advantage going into the future.

■

Republicans would be very foolish indeed to dismiss these analyses out of hand. Some demographic trends do look ominous for them. But some of those trends are overrated, and they are countered by other demographic shifts. The truth is that the parties are at parity, and it's awfully difficult to see which has the advantage going into the future.

Probably the most worrisome trends for the Republicans are the increased numbers of immigrants and single women. Even if Republicans can make a dent in the huge Democratic majorities among these groups, they are extremely unlikely to drawn even in them. So as the total numbers of immigrants and single women grow, Republicans will lose ground.

But even here, it's possible to overstate the trend. Hard as it may be to believe, Hispanics helped the Republicans in the presidential contest. Bush only got a third of their votes. But the Hispanics who voted Democratic didn't matter. A lot of them—75 percent—were in California and Texas. California would have gone for Gore without them, and they didn't keep Bush from winning Texas. Cuban-Americans, meanwhile, put Bush over the top in Florida.

Voter turnout among Hispanics and single women may also prove disappointing for Democrats. Hispanics made up only 4 percent of the electorate in 2000. Naturalization rates for immigrants from Mexico are quite low. The immigrants' participation in politics may catch up to their numbers by 2015—but who knows how they'll be voting by then? Democrats think that "waitress moms" will vote for them because they're struggling to make ends meet and need help from the government. But they may be too busy to vote.

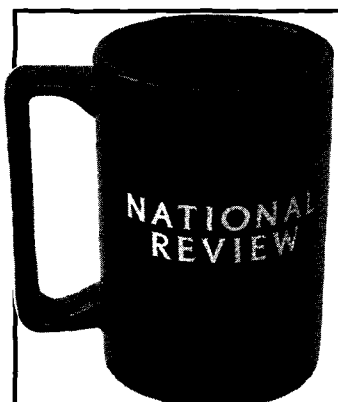
The graying of the population won't necessarily help the Democrats, either, because the composition of the elderly population is changing. The New Deal generation is passing away, replaced by voters who are less committed to the Democrats. Republicans were able to get about half the senior vote in both 1998 and 2000.

"Wired workers"—people who work in high-tech industries—may become a Democratic constituency, but it's too soon to tell. It wouldn't be surprising if they voted for Clinton and Gore. Many of them are young and single. Almost all of them—at least until recently—felt that their economic circumstances were improving, and voters who felt that way went heavily for Gore. Yet the Democratic Leadership Council's postelection poll found that Bush actually carried wired workers. Evidently their social liberalism wasn't as strong as advertised. And there's not much evidence that social liberalism is growing. The movement in the polls over the last decade has been against abortion.

The GOP has some other economic trends on its side. The unions are still declining. (Bush beat Gore by 8 points among voters who don't belong to a union.) And then there's the growth of the new investor class. A survey done in October by John Zogby suggested not only that new investors are more likely to become Republicans than non-investors, but that this tendency increases with the length of time they've been investing. In an analysis of that survey for the Dean Witter Foundation, Richard Nadler estimated that if the trend of the last decade continues, Republicans should pick up about 175,000 votes a year. (Gore's plurality, remember, was 540,000.) And that's assuming that Republicans continue to refrain from making targeted appeals to these new investors.

Contrary to Ruy Teixeira, geography is also working in favor of the Republicans. Of the eight states that are gaining congressional seats and electoral votes as a result of the latest census, Gore took one (California) and came very close in one more (Florida). If the 2000 election were held under the new dispensation, Bush would have seven more electoral votes and Gore seven fewer.

Redistricting based on the new census should also help congressional Republicans, because they have more governors and state legislatures than they did last time. In 1991, they were able to draw the boundaries for five seats to the Democrats' 172. This time, they will have control over 95 seats and the Democrats will have 101. The GOP should end the process with a small structural majority in the House.



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Republicans might lose the House in a particular election—if there's a recession in '02, for example—but they ought to have a majority for most of the next ten years.

Gerrymandering isn't the only thing helping congressional Republicans. The percentage of voters who pick a Republican for Congress has risen slightly in the last two elections. (Yes, Republicans lost seats in both of them. The geographic distribution of votes matters, as Al Gore could tell you.) Congressional Republicans ran ahead of Bush—and of Gore, for that matter.

The Democratic trend in the Senate isn't as strong as it looks, either. Liberals are saying that just as Democratic defeats in 1980 presaged an era of Republican dominance, so Republican defeats in 2000 presage an era of Democratic dominance. But the parallel is dubious. In 2000, there were a lot of vulnerable freshman Republicans who had been elected in the landslide of 1994, when Republicans picked up ten Senate seats. Republicans ended up losing five in November. In 1980, on the other hand, Democrats didn't have as many freshmen—they had picked up only three seats in 1974. Their loss of twelve seats signaled a national political shift to the right.

There's a final reason to doubt that the Democrats are inevitably going to dominate American politics over the next generation: the effect of losing the presidency. As Democrats have been relearning, not having the White House makes it much harder to get a message across. It also makes it harder to frighten voters about the Republicans. In 2004, abortion will still be legal. How are the Democrats going to persuade suburban women that President Bush is going to throw their daughters in jail?

Although they have achieved an impressive degree of tactical unity in opposition to the president, the Democrats are divided and confused. Should they try to appeal to wired workers based on gun control? Most Democrats think that the issue backfired on them in the last election. How, for that matter, are they supposed to appeal to this upwardly mobile constituency while retaining the allegiance of voters who aren't doing so well? The difficulty of that task was one reason Al Gore couldn't decide whether to be a "populist" or a New Democrat last year.

Ed Kilgore, policy director for the Democratic Leadership Council, is skeptical of the emerging-majority thesis: "The arguments you hear from the Left about a Democratic majority do have almost a LEGO quality to them of putting together groups. I know that's the nature of public-opinion polling, but what's kind of lacking is a general message for the Democratic party."

Again, John Judis, Ruy Teixeira, and Pat Reddy could be right. Certainly their arguments should make Republicans rethink their support of high immigration and easy divorce laws. But just as likely as an emerging Democratic majority is continued parity. And, with parity, trench warfare. Already strategists in both parties are beginning to look at the ten to fifteen races that will matter in 2002.

The tiebreaker will be the economy. Millions of people voted for Clinton and Gore because they had presided over peace and prosperity. If Bush is blessed with similar circumstances in 2004, he is likely to win. **NR**

'Bang'

Guns, rap, and silence

JAY NORDLINGER

A LOT of people were interested in the Sean "Puffy" Combs trial: fans of rap music; celebrity-watchers; connoisseurs of popular culture. But one group of people showed no interest whatsoever: gun-control activists. This was rather strange—a dog that didn't bark. The Combs case was awash in guns; so is Combs's world—that of rap, or "hip-hop." But the gun-controllers prefer to ignore this dark corner. Their indifference, or passivity, may be taken to represent a broader failure of liberalism to confront ghetto culture—to look it in the eye and cry, "No!"

Combs—known as "Puff Daddy"—is a major figure in rap, the boss of a record label called "Bad Boy." (Another label is called "Murder, Inc."—one refreshing thing about the rappers is their lack of pretense.) The Combs case dominated New York at the beginning of this year, the trial of a century that is still very young. What happened is this: In December 1999, Combs visited a nightclub with his girlfriend (the pop star Jennifer Lopez), a few "associates," and several of his guns. Someone insulted Combs. Shooting broke out. Three people were injured, two of them badly. Then Combs and his group fled the scene. When the police finally caught up with the getaway car—or rather, the getaway Lincoln Navigator SUV—they found two guns. Combs was subsequently charged with illegal weapons possession and bribery (he had tried to get his driver to accept responsibility for the guns). The rapper's guilt seemed clear, but he denied everything.

In a now-de rigueur move, Combs hired Johnnie Cochran, the O.J. lawyer, who composed a few new rhymes and flashed his smile at the jury. Combs got off. One of those "associates," however, was not so lucky: Jamal "Shyne" Barrow—a rapper described as Combs's protégé—was found guilty of first-degree assault. He now faces 25 years in prison.

So, another day, another rap case—this time, no one died. It's easy to look away from rap and its nature. But it should not be so, and it certainly shouldn't be so for gun-controllers. Thug rappers should be their worst nightmare (and a lot of other people's). Yet the anti-gun activists would rather go after Charlton Heston, rednecks, and other soft targets. It's far more comfortable to torment the NRA, which advocates not only gun rights but gun safety, than to get in the faces of "gangsta" rappers, who glory in guns and gun violence in song after song after song. Most people, by now, are familiar with rap's hideous and constant degradation of women (where are the feminists, incidentally?). They are less familiar with rap's celebration of the gun. Back in 1992, there was a brief furor over a rap called "Cop Killer." The idea of gunning down policemen is certainly an attention-getter. But if rappers are enthusing only about killing one another, that seems to be another matter, something to be swept under the rug.

Liberals have occasionally been interested in this subject.

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Tipper and Al Gore were, before Hollywood bit their heads off. Usually, though, when you try to interest liberals in the horrors of today's worst music, they roll their eyes and recall how their parents railed against "Elvis's pelvis." Ah, the two magic words: "Elvis's pelvis." Say them, and you shut down any discussion about, for example, rap's effects on the young. And doesn't every generation murmur, with a sigh and a shake of the head, "Kids today . . ."? But any sensate being can see that "gangsta" rap—with its sanction, even urging, of rape, murder, and other abuse—has nothing at all in common with Elvis Presley's swaying hips. It must be, in part, a fear of uncoolness—of fogeydom—that keeps many people from coming to grips with rap. They are perfectly happy to claim that the sight of Joe Camel causes millions of young'uns to smoke cigarettes; but they are reluctant to consider what rap—poured constantly into young ears—might do.

THE OBJECT OF THEIR AFFECTIONS

Rappers sing of guns with almost lascivious glee. They express close to an erotic feeling about their "pieces": "glocks" (for the Austrian manufacturer), "gats" (short for Gatlings), "nines" or "ninas" (for 9-mm pistols), and so on in a long and chilling lexicon. Bullets and clips are lingered over as eyes and lips might be in love songs. Here's a sample from "Trigga Gots No Heart" by the rapper Spice 1: "Caps [bullets] peel from gangsters in my 'hood. You better use that nina 'cause that deuce-deuce [.22-caliber weapon] ain't no good, and I'm taking up a hobby, maniac murderin', doin' massacre robbery." There is no end of material like this. The rapper Notorious B.I.G., slain by gun in 1997, sang, "Somebody's gotta die. Let the gunshots blow. Somebody's gotta die. Nobody gotta know that I killed yo' a** in the midst, kid." And, "Don't fill them clips too high. Give them bullets room to breathe. Damn, where was I?" Dr. Dre had a hit called "Rat-Tat-Tat-Tat," whose refrain went, "Never hesitate to put a nigga on his back. Rat-tat-tat-tat to the tat like that, and I never hesitate to put a nigga on his back."

During the Combs trial, some thought that Shyne Barrow's lyrics would do the young man no good. They are horrible, but since millions of kids drink them in, their parents might as well know them, too. In "Bad Boyz," Barrow raps, "Now tell me, who wanna f*** with us? Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. I bang—and let your f***in' brains hang . . . My point is double-fours [a .44 magnum] at your f***in' jaws, pointed hollow point sh** [this is bullet terminology], four point six [?], need I say more? Or do you get the point, b**ch?" In another track—"Bang"—he says, "Niggas wanna bang. We could bang out till the clip's done, or your vital arteries hang out." And: "Got my mind right, like Al Pacino and Nino. I head to Capitol Hill to kidnap Janet Reno. Words droppin' and shockin', guns cockin' and poppin', somebody call Cochran" (that would be the lawyer Johnnie—life imitating art, or is it the other way around?). Barrow continues, "No time to waste, nine in my waist, ready for war, any time, any place. F*** it, just another case."

Are these words meant to be taken seriously, or are they just play—disturbing, maybe, but basically harmless? Shyne Barrow did, indeed, have a "nine in his waist" at that nightclub, and it appears to have been luck that he didn't kill the people he hit. Moral relativism, however, is rife in discussion about rap (such as it is). Barrow's lawyer, Murray Richman, made the following, delicious comment to the *New York Post* last December: "Dostoyevsky wrote about murder—does that implicate him as a murderer?" Or "when Eartha Kitt salaciously sings 'Santa, Baby,' does that mean she really wants to sleep with Santa Claus?" This sort of statement is meant to be a conversation-stopper, like "Elvis's pelvis." You know: Dostoyevsky, Eartha Kitt, Shyne Barrow—artists all, and liable to be misunderstood by the conservative and hung-up. "Kids today . . ."—ha ha.

Now, gun-control groups are concerned—and why shouldn't they be?—with laws and loopholes and gun shows and accidents in homes and Charlton Heston and, of course, school shootings, out of which they make hay. They say nothing about hip-hop culture, and next to nothing about popular culture generally. The groups put out a steady stream of press releases: praising states' "safety initiatives," trying to shame manufacturers, worrying about "children's health." In fact, they seem to burrow into every nook and cranny of American life—but keep mum about the ghetto and its anthems.

Sean "Puffy" Combs by Roman Genn

Nancy Hwa is spokesman for Handgun Control, Inc. (the Jim and Sarah Brady group). She says that her organization has "called on people in the creative industry not to glamorize guns," but has not dealt with hip-hop in particular. "Other targets have a more direct relationship with getting your hands on guns," she says—for example, "sales at gun shows." And no one group, she sensibly points out, can cover everything. Plus, "when it comes right down to it, you can listen to rap or Marilyn Manson or country music, and, in the end, as long as the young person can't get their hands on a gun, all they're guilty of is questionable taste in music." For Handgun Control, Inc., the issue is "access," plain and simple.

Ted Pascoe speaks for Do It for the Kids!, a gun-control group in Colorado. "We don't address it," he says of the rap issue. "We have enough trouble with the Second Amendment without attacking the First as well."

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Meaning? "Well, there is a perception in this country that individuals enjoy the protections conferred by the Second Amendment. But that amendment only confers on states the right to maintain militias. So the individual has no standing in court to make Second Amendment claims. However, Americans tend to believe they *do* have the right to bear arms. So, it's troublesome, because whenever you start talking about passing stronger gun laws, a lot of folks—even if they're not involved in the issue, or vested in it—can invoke the Second Amendment and sometimes effectively take the wind out of your sails." A stance against rap, says Pascoe, would only bring trouble: "The large number of gun-control groups don't want to be seen as attacking every element in the Constitution, or more than one. I think that the First Amendment contains rights that we *do* enjoy—that individuals have First Amendment rights."

The confusion of rights and responsibilities—of "what you got a right to do and what is right to do," as the supreme fogey Bill Bennett puts it—is an old one.

Andy Pelosi, who represents New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, says that his group "really focuses on legislative issues—we've done a little bit of violence in the media, but not rap." He makes the point that "it would be unfair to look at one genre without looking at the others. You could make a case about heavy metal, alternative rock—you wouldn't want to single out just rap." This would, indeed, be a painful step for most liberals. It would involve a clash of their pieties: gun control—outright demonization of the gun—and a taboo against taking issue with black culture in any of its aspects. The old "No enemies to the left" might mingle with a new slogan: "No enemies among blacks" (with Clarence Thomas and the other Toms excepted, of course).

'SILENCE KILLS'

The country is engaged in a great debate over gun control; but there should be no disagreement about the awfulness—why not go all the way? the evil—of the most violent, dehumanizing, and desensitizing rap. The inner city is bleeding from gun crime. White America should probably think harder about the perpetual Columbines taking place in ghettos. Of course, many excuse rap on grounds that it merely reflects life on the mean streets. And whether this stuff has bloody consequences is an open question. In 1993, a rapper called Masta Ace, talking to the *St. Petersburg Times*, said, "It's like a Schwarzenegger movie—you don't come out wanting to shoot anybody." But he quickly had a second thought: "I think it does shape mentalities and helps develop a callousness to where you could really shoot somebody and not think twice about it."

Sure: There's only so much a gun-control group or conservative alarm-raisers or anyone else can do about (what might be termed) hate rap. But activists, who love to talk—it is their principal activity—might at least talk. A group called the Campus Alliance to End Gun Violence proclaims as its number-one position, "Gun violence disproportionately preys on the young. Silence kills. We must speak." Well, all right: Minus a right-wing militia or two, there is only one class of people—an extremely wealthy and popular class of people—that actually *exalts* gun violence. So . . . ? **NR**

What's in a (Team) Name?

The war against Indian symbols

JOHN J. MILLER

CALL it a case of March Madness. As the NCAA's basketball tournament prepared to get under way, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights signaled its intention to condemn the University of Illinois and its top-seeded team, the Fighting Illini. Actually, the commission didn't single out the poor Illini; it blasted *all* sports teams that use Indian names and images. In a way, that's great news: If the commission has the time and energy to fret over such trivia as the University of North Dakota calling its hockey squad the Fighting Sioux, then perhaps the state of civil rights and race relations is better than we thought. The commission once investigated and exposed examples of authentic discrimination; now it's just playing games.

Then again, this is an issue of great seriousness to some people, and it has been for a while. It's a bit surprising, in fact, that the commission waited so long to tackle the subject. Three decades ago, Stanford University quit using the moniker "Indians" (now its teams go by "The Cardinal," as in the color). Dartmouth soon followed suit, and now every year or two another college or university scraps an Indian nickname. The Marquette Warriors morphed into the Golden Eagles. The St. John's Redmen have become the Red Storm. In Ohio, Miami University switched from the Redskins to the Redhawks. On March 13, Gov. George Ryan of Illinois was hauled into the scrum over the Fighting Illini and their mascot. "I think it's done honorably. I think it's done professionally," he said. "I don't see any degradation to it at all."

The commission couldn't disagree more: It sees degradation everywhere. A draft statement discussed at the panel's March 9 meeting said that Indian team names perpetuate "harmful stereotypes" and foster "a racially hostile environment"; "they also encourage biases and prejudices"; "they are offensive, harmful, [and] dehumanizing"; and so on. In the midst of all this came a whopper: the notion that schools employing these names "may violate" federal civil-rights laws because they discriminate "on the basis of race, color, or national origin" and prevent "'full and equal employment' in places of public accommodation." In other words, the commission thinks the Department of Justice should go on the warpath against at least five dozen colleges and universities, plus hundreds if not thousands of high schools—all because of what they call their sports teams.

That's not likely to happen. Statements adopted by the commission carry only the force of suggestion, and they are easily (and appropriately) ignored. The legal principle involved here is pretty thin, too. But that doesn't mean the

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commission's statement will have no effect when it's approved, probably on April 13. Harsh rhetoric is sure to generate plenty of media attention, especially in places where a local team is the object of the controversy.

It should matter, however, that Indians themselves don't uniformly believe that "these references . . . are disrespectful and offensive," as the commission's proposed statement asserts. It is true that some Indians feel this way, and their sentiments shouldn't be dismissed. But it is also true that many Indians have a rather different view of the issue. The first point is an obvious one: People don't name teams after things they hate. A team name is designed to project some quality fans and athletes can admire and emulate, whether it's toughness (Georgia Bulldogs), ferocity (Michigan Wolverines), or regional pride (Kansas Jayhawks). The Michigan State Spartans use what is basically an ethnic term, albeit a classical one, to convey a sense of military vigor. (Is there a team anywhere in sports called the Athenians?) This is, at bottom, a sign of respect—and it should come as no surprise that many people believe they honor Indians when they name teams after them.

It makes sense that people would want to do this. Indians, after all, occupy a special niche in the American imagination, in which they are associated with martial courage and a spirituality grounded in the natural world. It is no accident that the environmental movement's most effective symbol was the Indian (portrayed by actor Iron Eyes Cody) who shed tears in the "Keep America Beautiful" anti-litter commercials of the 1970s. Because of these positive associations, tribal names find their way onto all kinds of consumer products, such as the Jeep Cherokee and the Dodge Dakota. For the same reason, Indian images appear on U.S. currency, such as the old Indian-head nickel and the new Sacajawea dollar. The Army even names its helicopters after tribes: the Apache Longbow, the Kiowa Warrior, the Comanche, and the Blackhawk. If we were to follow the commission's principle to its logical conclusion, a number of cities (e.g., Chicago, Miami, and Milwaukee), plus about half the states, would have to be renamed.

Andy Lyons/Allsport

Chief Osceola, still undefeated

Complicating the picture is the fact that Indian tribes aren't the only ethnic groups to have teams named after them. The Fighting Irish of Notre Dame—perhaps the most popular college-football team in the country, thanks to what is essentially a tribal loyalty among Irish-Americans—are probably the best-known example of this. And they're not alone. There are also the Bethany College Swedes, the Edinboro University Fighting Scots, the Iona Gaels, and the Sonoma State University Cossacks. (The Idaho Vandals and the Southern California Trojans arguably belong in the club, too.) Then there are the San Diego State University Aztecs: In a student referendum last fall, 95 percent supported keeping the name and 87 percent supported keeping the "Monty Montezuma" mascot and logo. In professional sports, there are the Minnesota Vikings and the Montreal Canadiens (note the French spelling). The San Diego Padres introduce not just an ethnic Hispanic dimension but a religious Catholic one. Yet few if any people think these team names are slanderous, even after a losing season. The Catholics are so relaxed about team names, in fact, that Pope John Paul II once said Mass at Sun Devil Stadium, where the Arizona State Sun Devils play football. (The school at least had the decency to cover up pictures of the team mascot: "Sparky," a devil complete with horns and pitchfork.)

The civil-rights commission's proposed statement doesn't mention any of this, but merely asserts that Indians fall into a special category owing to "the long history of forced assimilation that American Indian people have endured in this country." What the commission and its allies want, however, is their own kind of forced assimilation: a government directive ordering schools to abandon distinctive names in favor of generic ones. This is what happened ten years ago in Michigan, when the federal commission's state-level affiliate bullied Eastern Michigan University into changing its team name from the Hurons to the Eagles. The regents voted to make the switch, without even consulting the descendants of the Hurons. The Huron-Wyandotte Association of Southern Michigan complained that nobody at the school had bothered to contact them, and that they actually had been proud of the Huron-EMU connection. Chiefs from tribes in Oklahoma and Canada visited the campus and urged the school to reverse course, but without success. The name Huron has been totally purged from campus, except for a small meeting room occasionally used by students who probably think it's named after the nearby Huron River.

If the Hurons have been assimilated out of sports, Cleveland's professional baseball team gets its name from a case of successful integration. In 1915, the club decided to honor Louis Sockalexis, the first American Indian to play in the major leagues, by calling itself the Indians. Many tribal activists seem unaware of this history—a fault that may lie more with the team than anybody else—and bitterly complain about the organization's smiling-Indian logo.

There are, in fact, many examples of teams and tribes cooperating for mutual benefit. Florida State University has an outstanding relationship with the state's Seminole tribe. The team mascot is Chief Osceola, a mounted student who plants a burning spear in the middle of the football field right before kickoff. His costume was designed in collaboration with the tribe, and he is named after a specific historical figure: The real Osceola confounded federal soldiers during the 1830s, and, as both kinds of Seminoles like to point out, he

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was never defeated. At FSU's annual homecoming game, tribal members crown the king and queen. The school band is called the Marching Chiefs. And the Seminoles' biggest fan may be Seminole Chief James Billie, who has criticized non–Seminole Indian groups that oppose FSU's team name. The tribe doesn't receive any sort of compensation, but it does earn a different kind of payoff: Because of Florida State's success on the gridiron, the Seminoles are probably one of the few Indian tribes ordinary Americans can place on a map. It's an unconventional form of education, though it's hard to think of one that would produce better results.

Central Michigan University isn't a sports powerhouse like FSU, but the same principle operates for its Chippewas. "The team name helps people recognize that we're a tribe in the middle of Michigan," says Frank Cloutier, a spokesman for the Saginaw Chippewa tribe. The CMU administration works closely with tribal members to keep them comfortable with the association. The school has agreed, for instance, to keep the image of a Chippewa off its logo. Fans don't perform the "tomahawk chop" at games. There's no drum-beating in the stands. Architects are even consulting with Chippewa leaders to incorporate cultural symbols into the design for a new health building on campus.

Students at these schools can gain a special opportunity to learn about their affiliated tribes. Although several tribes formally oppose the University of North Dakota's team name, the Spirit Lake Tribal Council passed a resolution last December saying that "if the University is going to be representing the 'Fighting Sioux,' the students should be made aware of the unique culture they will be representing." That's a good idea, and it's exactly what happens at Arapahoe High School in Littleton, Colo., where students cheer for the Warriors on the football field and learn about the real Arapahoe in the classroom. The school gym is named after Anthony Sitting Eagle, an Arapahoe leader, and every year the students celebrate "Arapahoe Day." Tribal members travel from their reservation to teach about their customs and history. A similar exchange occurs between students at Arcadia High School near Los Angeles and an Apache tribe in Arizona. Last fall, the school band performed at an Apache reservation, and Apache leaders spoke and danced at Arcadia. None of this would have happened but for the school's team name. An added twist is that many of Arcadia's students come from Chinese-immigrant families.

There are plenty of cases in which the objections to Indian names are reasonable. The descendants of the Lakota Sioux leader Crazy Horse have sued the brewer of Original Crazy Horse Malt Liquor. But even if they had not, naming a brand of beer after an Indian leader or tribe is in egregiously poor taste, given the sordid history of "firewater" and the chronic problem of alcoholism on reservations.

■

There would be no justice in vanquishing every last Indian reference found in the wide world of sports.

■

The sports world, too, could stand some improvement. A few years ago, the Alcorn State Scalping Braves appropriately lost their adjective. There are a handful of high schools that call their teams the Savages, and use cartoonish Indian mascots. Traditions often are worth defending simply because they're traditions, but some teams may want to ask themselves whether their name or logo is one that, say, an expansion club might proudly adopt today. By this standard, the Washington Redskins should reconsider their name. The team's Indian-head logo is perfectly respectable, and it was even designed by an Indian artist. The real problem, however, is a distasteful name that is the equivalent of other teams calling themselves the Palefaces or the Yellow Horde. The teams' owners and fans may mean no disrespect, but the name is functionally a slur. Indian activists have targeted the Redskins on this basis, and they've experienced some success. In 1998, they sued under an old copyright law that forbids disparaging trademarks—the team currently earns millions annually from the sale of T-shirts, hats, and other merchandise. The Indian activists won the first round, but the case remains in court. There would be some measure of justice in the Redskins' owners losing the lawsuit.

But there would be no justice in vanquishing every last Indian reference found in the wide world of sports. Imagine that no teams had ever chosen to name themselves after a tribe: There would still be bunch of clubs called the Cowboys, a few dubbed the Bison or the Wranglers—but not a single one derived from the indigenous people of North America. It's tempting to think that the same activists who now complain that the presence of Indian team names is an insult would then say that the absence of Indian team names is proof of racism. And in that latter claim, there would be substantially more justice. **NR**

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Professor Moneybags

When academics get rich . . . the agony!

DINESH D'SOUZA

THE image of the impecunious professor dies hard, but many of today's college teachers and administrators are in fact living rather well. Academic conferences, once dominated by disheveled, sorry-looking folk, are now frequently a high-class affair, featuring speakers and even ordinary attendees in designer suits. College towns that once rattled with beat-up old Volkswagens and Chevys now hum and purr with shiny new Volvos, BMWs, Lexuses, and even Porsches. Some academics used to attend events just for the free wine and hors d'oeuvres; today this practice is rare—except among graduate students. Indeed, many academic couples these days think nothing of paying $4 apiece for a Venti nonfat latte, or $100 for dinner and wine at the local Italian bistro. A die-hard liberal professor whom I have debated in the past recently surprised me when he confided that he voted Republican last November: "I really like Bush's position on getting rid of the estate tax."

Yes, it's true. Affluence, once the preserve of the entrepreneurial class and the corporate sector, has now come to academia. Six-figure salaries, which used to be restricted to college presidents and a few senior faculty members in business and engineering, are no longer uncommon. The stock-market boom of the past two decades, rising home values, two-earner households, and external sources of income from royalties, lecture fees, etc., all have given the academic world a new taste of prosperity.

You might expect all these professors and administrators who have seen their incomes rise—and their net worth soar—to be living it up and, like my old debate partner, worrying only about their tax liability. But in fact, the new affluence has generated profound ambivalence in the academic community. You won't find such anxiety in the business or engineering schools, where professors typically compare their salaries to the much more generous incomes of those in the corporate sector. Among a large segment of academia, however—especially professors of the baby-boom generation who teach in the humanities and social sciences—there is evident angst about achieving a bourgeois prosperity that many never dreamed possible, and against which they have railed for most of their lives.

Robert Frank, who teaches economics and public policy at Cornell, describes his predicament when a relative offered a few years ago to sell him a Porsche 911 at a bargain price. "I was sorely tempted," he confesses. But he knew that Ithaca has a strong social norm against conspicuous consumption. A chemistry professor who drove a Porsche convertible told him that he occasionally had to endure vandalism and obscene gestures. Frank passed up the deal because "I realized that unless I could put a sign on the car that explained how I happened to acquire it, I would never really feel comfortable driving it." Now, however, Frank has changed his mind and purchased a BMW. Still, he seems apologetic about it, and in his most recent book, *Luxury Fever*, he deplores the rising tide of materialism and consumerism in America.

A couple of years ago the *Wall Street Journal* ran an article—entitled "Even Leftists Have Servants Now"—profiling several professors who have hired gardeners, pool men, cooks, maids, and nannies. Most of these servants are, ahem, blacks and Mexicans. The contortions these academics go through to justify their behavior make for captivating reading. Political scientist Mark Petracca, of the University of California at Irvine, says he finally agreed to get a nanny, but he absolutely refuses to hire a gardener, even though everyone else in his neighborhood has one. Putting all his learning on display, Petracca explains: "It reeks of a kind of imperial colonialism one can imagine present in Shanghai."

Recently an editor at a California publishing house told me about one of her authors who has published several books denouncing the rich for selfishness and greed. Even though the latest one has been out for a while now, the author regularly calls her to find out how it's selling. Hearing the dismal sales figures, he responds, "Next time I'm really going to slam those greedy bastards."

It is easy to laugh at this hypocrisy, and I do. And I'm sure the businessmen who read that *Wall Street Journal* article also had a hearty chuckle. Why not? These are the same professors who for years have directed their resentment and moral indignation at "the rich." Now, irony of ironies, the enemies of the rich have joined the rich. The virtue of impoverishment has given way to the vice of plenty. The good guys have become bad guys, and they stand condemned in their own books and Ph.D. dissertations—indeed, in their own hearts. So it's only fair that, hoist on their own petard, these self-righteous moralizers be permitted to suffer a little for sinning against their own moral code.

Even hypocrites, however, deserve a measure of admiration, because although their actions may contradict their moral ideals, they deserve credit for at least espousing those ideals. Also, the anguish of the professor making six figures is worth exploring, because it reveals a deep split in the academic psyche. Call it the moral conundrum of success. These are people who know they are doing well, but they also want to feel that they are doing good. They want to succeed, but without "selling out." They want material comforts, even luxuries, but they are eager to show they have not been consumed by materialism. In short, they want to integrate the goods of the body with the goods of the soul, and they want their personal prosperity to promote the civic or common good. These are decent, even lofty, ideals.

The decency of these aims adds luster to a great deal of

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ridiculous social and moral posturing. But our sympathy for the ideals should not extend to sympathy for this posturing. The posturing constitutes, rather, a betrayal of the ideals, and in my view it is only by overcoming their guilt about capitalism and success that these academics will come closer to achieving their goals.

What, after all, is the real academic complaint against capitalism and affluence? If we read Michael Walzer, Andrew Hacker, Andrew Ross, or Robert Putnam, we find variations on a single theme: Capitalism produces an unjust society in which economic values drive out human values. The rich benefit but the poor languish. Greed and consumerism prevail at the expense of altruism, spiritual wholeness, and human relationships. The mad pursuit of technology and profits endangers our environment and undermines our familial and communal bonds.

Such attacks on capitalism and commerce are not new. We associate some of them with Karl Marx, but Adam Smith had acknowledged many decades earlier in *The Wealth of Nations* that self-interest was the motivating force that drove the market system. And Smith's defense of capitalism was merely an updating of Bernard Mandeville's argument that private vices lead to public benefits. Long before Smith and Mandeville, the Greeks and Romans reviled merchants and traders as lowlife scum, and the Bible warned that "the love of money is the root of all evil."

The monied lefty professor, by Roman Genn

What is new in today's criticisms of wealth is that many of the critics are confronting the challenges posed by wealth in their own lives. These challenges are all the more severe because in our age of affluence, the problems of inequality and materialism seem to have reached gargantuan proportions. Some entrepreneurs in their mid-30s boast a net worth that rivals the gross national product of small countries. Well-off people in the West spend $2 on a bottle of designer water, while people in the poorest third of the world's population live on less than $2 a day. Even in the United States, the economic divisions are severe. The academic literature on the wealth gap points out that the top 10 percent of the U.S. population now owns two-thirds of the wealth; that means that the bottom 90 percent of Americans own only one-third of the wealth. There has been a spate of books complaining that the middle class, the bulwark of American society, is rapidly dissolving, and that we are becoming a nation in which many struggle while a few live high on the hog.

But what's *really* going on is somewhat more interesting: In 1980, America was a much more egalitarian country, simply because not many Americans were rich. At that time, according to census data, if you made $55,000 a year you were in the top 5 percent of income earners in America. Fewer than a million households qualified as millionaires. Today you need $150,000 in annual income to make it into the top 5 percent. And over the past two decades the number of millionaire households has soared to 5 million. Five million households amounts to 20 million people.

This means that America has created the first mass affluent class in world history. I call it the Overclass. The earlier great achievement of the West was to create a middle class, to take people who were poor and give them necessities and basic comforts. Now the United States has gone further, elevating a large number of people to the ranks of the affluent. And as these people have become well off, they have increased the gap between themselves and the rest of the population—so inequality is greater. But it's not true to say that the rich have gotten richer while the rest have gotten poorer; data from the Federal Reserve Board show that over the past two decades the median net worth in this country has risen a moderate but respectable 25 percent, to around $75,000. What has happened is that the rich have gotten richer and the rest have also gotten richer, although not at the same pace. An exclusive focus on inequality carries the implication that the emergence of the Overclass as a mass phenomenon is a bad thing, when it is in fact a good thing.

To be sure, affluence opens up for ordinary people the same avenues of indulgence and debauchery traditionally available only to the aristocratic few. In that sense a rich society is also likely to be a more self-indulgent and materialist society. But we should also remember that affluence liberates people from necessity and drudgery, and democratizes access to the higher good of self-fulfillment and spiritual striving. As theologian Michael Novak puts it, "The Bible tells us that man does not live by bread alone, but often you have to have bread to realize this."

The affluence made possible by capitalism also gives us the means to realize our social values. We can expand access to computers and the Internet so that young people in the Bronx, and in Karachi, have the same access to information as the students in America's finest universities. A wealthy society can afford the luxury of environmental protection, whereas poor loggers and farmers are unlikely to save trees and forests when their livelihoods depend on cutting and clearing. Finally, technology and affluence give us the flexibility to work at home, or to work part time, or to move away from crowded urban areas into small towns and communities where we can enjoy more lasting relationships and a stronger sense of belonging.

It's time for academia to get over its psychological hang-up about wealth and discover the virtue of prosperity. What is the point of chasing after success if you feel guilty about it? We would do far better to recognize that capitalism, technology, and wealth are not necessarily the enemies of the social values that we hold dear; indeed, used correctly, they provide the infrastructure and give us the tools to implement those values. So go ahead, Mark Petracca, and hire that gardener. It will free up your time to do more research, or even volunteer work. More importantly, by creating that job, you'll be expanding the income of those at the lower end of the economic scale—and you'll find it much more rewarding to boost somebody's standard of living than to complain about why others don't. **NR**

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Annual Causes of Deaths in the US

Tobacco: 430,700[1]

1. Average 1990-1994. *Source:* "Smoking-Attributable Mortality and Years of Potential Life Lost," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control, 1997), May 23, 1997, Vol. 46, No. 20, p. 449.

Alcohol: 110,640[2]

2. 1996. *Source:* "Number of deaths and age-adjusted death rates per 100,000 population for categories of alcohol-related (A-R) mortality, United States and States, 1979-96," National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, from the web at http://silk.nih.gov/silk/niaaa1/database/armort01.txt, last accessed Feb. 12, 2001, citing Alcohol Epidemiologic Data System, Saadatmand, F, Stinson, FS, Grant, BF, and Dufour, MC, "Surveillance Report #52: Liver Cirrhosis Mortality in the United States, 1970-96" (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Division of Biometry and Epidemiology, December 1999).

Adverse Reactions to Prescription Drugs: 32,000[3]

3. Average 1982-1998. *Source:* Lazarou, J, Pomeranz, BH, Corey, PN, "Incidence of adverse drug reactions in hospitalized patients: a meta-analysis of prospective studies," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Chicago, IL: American Medical Association, 1998), 1998;279:1200-1205, also letters column, "Adverse Drug Reactions in Hospitalized Patients,", JAMA (Chicago, IL: AMA, 1998), Nov. 25, 1998, Vol. 280, No. 20, from the web at http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v280n20/full/jlt1125-1.html, last accessed Feb. 12, 2001.

Suicide: 30,575[4]

4. 1998. *Source:* Murphy, Sheila L., "Deaths: Final Data for 1998," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), Table 10, p. 53.

Homicide: 18,272[5]

5. 1998. *Source:* Murphy, Sheila L., "Deaths: Final Data for 1998," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), Table 10, p. 53.

All Licit & Illicit Drug-Induced Deaths: 16,926[6]

6. 1998. *Source:* Murphy, Sheila L., "Deaths: Final Data for 1998," National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 11 (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, July 24, 2000), pp. 1, 10.

Anti-Inflammatory Drugs such as Aspirin: 7,600[7]

7. 1992. *Source:* Robyn Tamblyn, PhD; Laeora Berkson, MD, MHPE, FRCPC; W. Dale Dauphinee, MD, FRCPC; David Gayton, MD, PhD, FRCPC; Roland Grad, MD, MSc; Allen Huang, MD, FRCPC; Lisa Isaac, PhD; Peter McLeod, MD, FRCPC; and Linda Snell, MD, MHPE, FRCPC, "Unnecessary Prescribing of NSAIDs and the Management of NSAID-Related Gastropathy in Medical Practice," *Annals of Internal Medicine* (Washington, DC: American College of Physicians, 1997), September 15, 1997, 127:429-438, from the web at http://www.acponline.org/journals/annals/15sep97/nsaid.htm , last accessed Feb. 14, 2001, citing Fries, JF, "Assessing and understanding patient risk," *Scandinavian Journal of Rheumatology Supplement,* 1992;92:21-4.

Marijuana: 0[8]

8. ?-Present. *Sources:* Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), available on the web at http://www.samhsa.gov/; also see Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A Benson, Jr., Marijuana and Medicine: Assessing the Science Base. Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Research, Institute of Medicine (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999, available on the web at http://www.nap.edu/html/marimed/; and US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, "In the Matter of Marijuana Rescheduling Petition" (Docket #86-22), September 6, 1988, p. 57.

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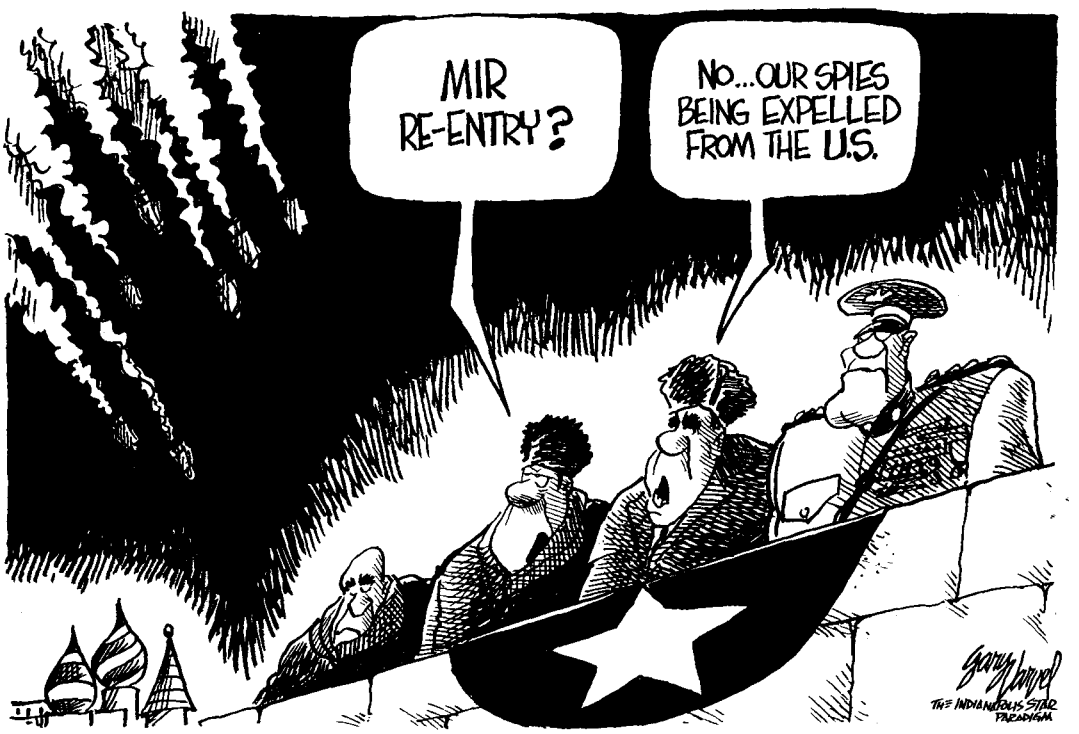

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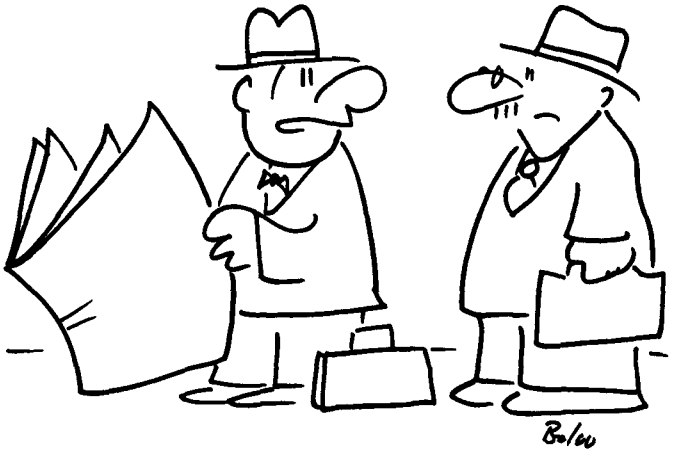
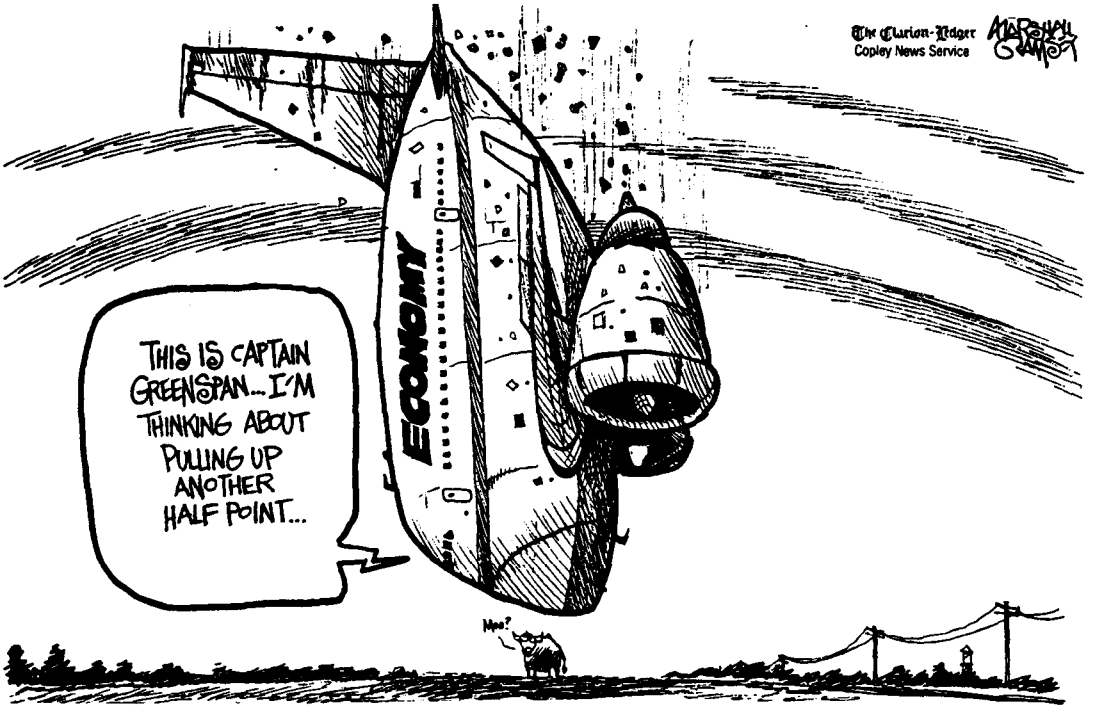


"These days, a person is considered genuine if he's up-front about being a phony."

JAPAN HEALS ITSELF

A pail of leeches was prescribed—
Some sucking to this day;
Then Shinto rites were laid on in
The customary way.
Court visitors sniff nosegays to
Allay the sickroom smells,
But doctors pale reviewing how
We dumped our S&L's.

—W. H. VON DREELE



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THE LONG VIEW

By Rob Long

TO: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
FROM: direct-e-invest@investimatic.com
SUBJECT: MAKE MONEY NOW!!!!!

Don't be scared by market volatility!!!! You can make $$$$$$ trading out-of-favor stocks!!!

TO: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
FROM: junior@sonicwhizzer.net
SUBJECT: Hi, Dad!

Hi Dad!

Things are great here at SonicWhizzer! Of course, the money situation is a little scary, since most of our early investors have dropped out of the second round of mezzanine angel-level equity private placement. But the good news is that we're doing a friends-and-family initial pre-pricing placement of a second-tier tranche of pre-IPO shares, which I think will pay off BIG, especially when we develop a product.

So can I put you down for, like, 100,000 shares?

TO: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
FROM: direct-e-invest@investimatic.com
SUBJECT: OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!!!!!!!

Don't miss out!!!!! Market volatility spells PROFIT!!!!!! Heavy discounts when you trade the same equity several times within a single trading day!!!!!!

TO: futurelawyer@yale.edu
FROM: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
SUBJECT: next year's tuition

Dear Pumpkin:

It was great to hear from you last weekend. Your mom and I are both so happy that the college experience is everything you wanted it to be.

Of course, college isn't the only place that a person can learn. In a way, I think, a person isn't truly "educated" in the full sense of the word until he (or she!! I'm getting better, pumpkin!!) has spent some time in the "real" world, as opposed to the academic one.

I guess what I'm getting at is, maybe you'd like to think about taking a year or two off from the stress and craziness of college? Maybe a break would be a good thing for everyone—but, I mean, primarily you, of course—and, hey, it'd give your mom and me a little more breathing room to raise the $33,567 a year for tuition, ha ha! Just kidding there, pumpkin.

You kids today grow up too fast, I think. How about taking a year or two to stop and smell the roses, to be a young person, to get off the "fast track" and, oh, I don't know, work in telemarketing?

Just a thought from your loving dad . . .

TO: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
FROM: direct-e-investment@investimatic.com
SUBJECT: Some questions about your portfolio

Please contact our investor relations department (investorrelations@investimatic.com) as soon as possible.

TO: iluvmydaytraydr@aol.com
FROM: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
SUBJECT: Will you please get out of the bathroom????

Honey, I know you're in there with the other laptop. I know you're logged on to AOL because you're on my buddy list. Just unlock the door, okay? This isn't getting us anywhere, sweetie, with you locked in the bathroom with the laptop and the wireless modem.

Obviously, I got sort of caught by surprise by this market downturn—which is totally TEMPORARY—and so some of my positions— okay, ALL of my positions—are showing a slight—okay, okay, TOTAL—loss. Of course, this can all be "good" news, from a tax perspective, but I know it's embarrassing to take your friends out to lunch and have the Money Market Visa debit card get refused, and to have the ATM card linked to our stock portfolio come up empty but honey, these are just glitches, okay?

Because, dear, the underlying fundamentals of the new economy are sound, okay? The productivity gains of the past few years can't be erased just because the Dow lost 600 points—wait a sec, my pager just buzzed. The Dow is down 800. Still, my point stands—or the NASDAQ took a hit. I mean, take us, for example. A few short years ago, if you were upset or mad at me, you'd just lock yourself in the bathroom and cry silently. Now, thanks to the New Economy, you can lock yourself in the bathroom and log on to one of your favorite chat rooms. (Not to mention that, thanks to a smart Qualcomm trade and a perfectly timed Global Crossing buy, that bathroom now has a marble whirlpool bath and a steam shower.)

Hey, did some idiots overextend themselves? Yeah, you bet they did. Did some fools "bet the house," as it were, on some cockamamie no-earnings web-based business? Sure, some total morons did. And you know what? I have no sympathy for them, okay? They didn't invest in carefully chosen growth equities. They didn't do exhaustive research in the appropriate chat rooms. They didn't watch enough CNBC.

I'm different, honey. I did all of those things. I paid attention to the fundamentals. And I know that we're about to turn the corner.

Your loving husband,

Luv2daytrayd@aol.com

TO: luv2daytrayd@aol.com
FROM: margincredit@investimatic.com
SUBJECT: Margin account

Dear Customer:

Your margin account is now closed. Please deposit $715,987.55 into your account to cover your positions.

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Bleeding Florida

RICHARD LOWRY

Down and Dirty: The Plot to Steal the Presidency, by Jake Tapper (Little, Brown, 514 pp., $24.95)

Bush v. Gore: The Court Cases and the Commentary, edited by E. J. Dionne Jr. and William Kristol (Brookings, 344 pp., $15.95)

THE Florida election battle seems long gone, and yet still very much with us. If the details have gone fuzzy and one of its combatants is safely in the White House (turning in by 10 every night), the Florida controversy continues to have the gravitational force of a dark star, not always visible to the naked eye, but exerting a powerful pull nonetheless. If the Republicans lose Congress next year, the Florida recount will be an important subtext, as the Left rallies its rank and file by waving the bloody chad. Though most of us have "moved on," the Left's obsession with Florida has helped it cement an impression that the result was essentially larcenous, with the U.S. Supreme Court's fingerprints all over it.

Two new books, in very different ways, revisit the scene of the supposed crime. *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol and *Washington Post* columnist E. J. Dionne have coedited a Florida primer, reproducing the court cases and journalistic commentary. Jake Tapper, a buzzy liberal political writer for *Salon* and quick-witted TV pundit, has written a 500-page book of original reportage. If Florida was stolen, evidence of the theft ought to show up somewhere in the pages of these books—but it never does. So hold the police tape.

George W. Bush & Al Gore by Roman Genn

If you want to know what Gore aide Michael Whouley's assistant Donnie Fowler ate at the Palm Beach Denny's at 12:20 A.M. the Thursday after the election, Tapper's book is for you. He has written an admirably substantial book, especially given the time constraints he was under. But 500 pages on, it's not clear why so much sheer reportorial detail is necessary. Tapper is guilty of Woodwardism run amok, reproducing conversations apparently for no reason other than that they are in his notebooks, but without Woodward's saving grace of at least reproducing dialogue from the highest levels of government or making a blockbuster revelation.

Here's a you-are-there snippet from Tapper, involving the date of a hearing early in the controversy:

> "I think that's tomorrow," [one Gore lawyer] says. "Tuesday."
>
> "Well, I've got a reporter on the phone here who says it's today" [says a Gore aide]. . . .
>
> "Is the hearing today?" [the first Gore lawyer] asks.
>
> "No, it's tomorrow," [another Gore lawyer] says.
>
> "I think it's today," [the first Gore lawyer] disagrees. "Check it out."
>
> [Yet another lawyer] calls the court clerk. The hearing is today, in half an hour.

Indeed, Tapper manages to tell us where just about every lawyer on either side was when he got the call to join the fight. To his credit, however, Tapper does turn up some interesting details. For instance, Gore honcho Bill Daley was driven nuts by Republicans' dumping on his father's record of—ahem—not-so-good government. After Republican representative Curt Weldon makes a disparaging reference to the paterfamilias, Daley places angry calls to the congressman's office for eleven days running (Weldon doesn't call back). After Bob Dole knocks the memory of the late, great mayor, Daley says of the Viagra pitchman, in a brutal but funny putdown: "We all knew he was dysfunctional from the waist down. Now we know he's dysfunctional from the shoulders up, too."

If it isn't newsy revelations every other page, you might suppose, it must be Tapper's freewheeling "gonzo journalism" that justifies his 500 pages. But his style is a tame thing, with no manic creativity or keyboard-rattling anger. His method boils down to five essential elements (follow them and perhaps you too can write for *Salon*): 1) don't write that people are "excited" or "angry"; write that they are "jazzed" or "pissed"; 2) use the word "bull****" liberally; 3) use lots of chapter headings with the F-word in them; 4) employ a two-word putdown, rendered as a full sentence—"But whatever"—for any spin or argument you find wanting; and 5) affect a world-weary, pox-on-all-their-houses detachment.

A 500-page book should have something to say. Tapper's only insight is that both the Gore and Bush teams are liars

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and hypocrites. To his credit, he nails both sides rather effectively. He doesn't buy the Gore "count-every-vote" mantra. The Gore team only wanted to pursue "undervotes"—punchcard ballots with no presidential vote recorded—in four selected Democratic counties. Critics of Bush could say that, in Florida, W. was attempting to preserve a legalistic artifact, a final count that didn't include every last vote cast in the state. But Gore was attempting to do *exactly* the same thing, except that his effort to achieve a particular legalistic result depended on defying and changing state law. As it turns out, Gore's narrow-gauge strategy—count *all* the votes, but just in four heavily Democratic counties—was a mistake, as subsequent media recounts have shown that the votes weren't there for him after all (at least if a reasonable standard for recounts was applied, which, of course, was never guaranteed).

The Gore team focused on these four counties because that seemed the most reliable way to produce new votes for the vice president, and to do so quickly. Since Bush was leading in the vote count from the beginning, time, for Gore, was constantly running out. Bush could claim that Gore was dragging things out in an attempt to "overturn" the result, and the charge would be more plausible with every passing day. As James Baker put it early on, in what would become the Bush litany, "The vote here in Florida was very close, and when it was counted, Gov. Bush was the winner. Now, three days later, the vote in Florida has been recounted [and Bush still leads]." Tapper initially says that both of these claims are "essentially untrue," part of the Republican Big Lie campaign. But then, about 400 pages later, Tapper turns around and reaffirms Baker's statement: "Bush actually *did win* the vote tally that night, by 1,500 or so votes, and the machine recount, by 300 votes."

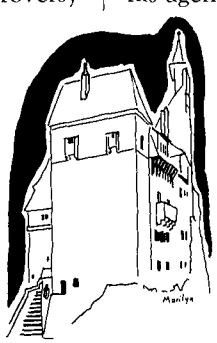
The trouble with Tapper's everyone's-a-liar thesis is that, besides being bone-numbingly unoriginal, it is less an argument than an attitude. The response to it should be: Yeah, so? Politics is always lubricated by lies and hypocrisy. The exigencies of winning and holding power make that all but unavoidable. But there are almost always deep questions at stake as well. A failure to notice this, let alone to take sides, is either laziness, a cop-out, or both. Since Tapper never acknowledges that any issue joined in Florida was more profound than Gore's and Bush's attempts to maneuver their way to victory, all his reporting makes for a less compelling account of the controversy than Kristol and Dionne's collection of reprints, which stand up well as an account of the "outside story" in Florida.

■

Standards for recounts in Florida became looser, as it became clear they weren't producing enough Gore votes.

■

As it happens, a deep philosophical divide between Left and Right—the concern for "fairness" on the one hand and for laws and rules on the other—tracked precisely with the partisan fight. On top of this was a battle over the role of the courts in American life, which reflected the partisan division as well. Gore relied on activist judges to throw out the established rules and impose "fairer" ones that would help him pull ahead. Bush was depending on the preservation of the legislature's original election rules, in hopes of holding on to his victory. Because of this, for conservatives, the Florida controversy was intellectually cleaner—at least up to the final, bittersweet U.S. Supreme Court ruling—than the Clinton impeachment fight, which involved an independent-counsel law that conservatives had always opposed.



Democrats argued in Florida that more people went to the polls intending to vote for Gore than for Bush. This is a claim that appears to have held up. Spoiled ballots, even in Republican counties, occurred overwhelmingly in Democratic precincts, where poorly educated voters often couldn't follow ballot instructions. But once it is stipulated that Gore had more would-be voters, there is still the question of what to do about it. It isn't enough to say, as so many of the liberals in the Kristol/Dionne collection do, "Count all the votes." (This is just a slogan, and a not particularly honest one.) There must be a system of rules for counting, or it becomes impossible to achieve a fair, orderly result. As it happens, there was just such a set of rules in Florida. It was written by the legislature, long before anyone knew the presidency would come down to a fight in Florida.

As Jonathan Rauch pointed out in a trenchant *New Republic* piece—reproduced in the collection—the only fair way to settle the Florida dispute was to abide by the election rules: "In one crucial respect, the first vote count is the best. It is the only count that is truly double blind. That is, neither the voters nor the vote counters can more than guess at the effects of their decisions on the overall outcome." As time wears on, all actors become more conscious of the possible effects of their actions on the results—hence the need for a deadline to keep the vote count from stretching into more and more uncertainty and game-playing. Rauch's insight was borne out in practice. Standards for recounts in Florida became looser, as it became clear they weren't producing enough Gore votes. This is why it made sense to talk of Gore's attempting to "steal the election." The only rules that he would accept were ones that would give him victory.

In this, the Florida supreme court was his agent. It first tossed out the legislature's deadline for certification, then turned around and tossed out its own deadline when it didn't work out for Gore, ignoring a U.S. Supreme Court decision that had been handed down in the meantime questioning the Florida court's reasoning in the first case. In that first case, the Florida court emphasized the role of the canvassing boards; in the second, it usurped that role, ordering recounts statewide that canvassing boards had never decided to undertake themselves. The first decision, by forcing back the deadline for certification of the votes, compressed the time allowed for a legal challenge—a "contest"—of

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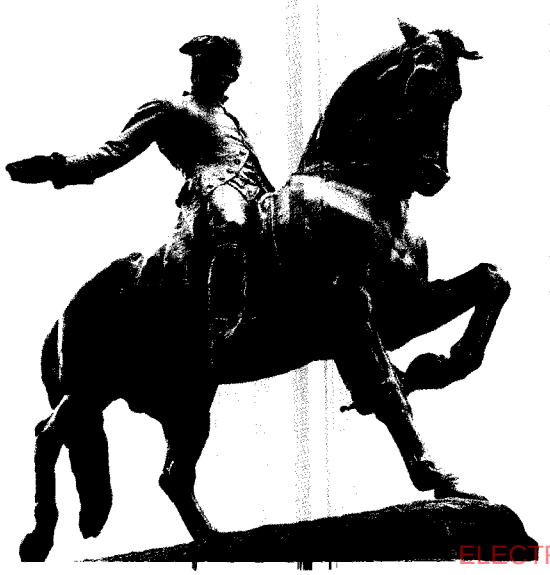

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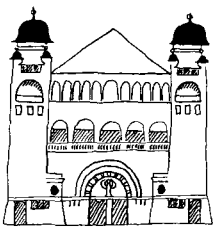
the election results in court as provided by Florida election law. This prompted the Gore team, in a rush to beat the deadline for resolving the matter, to call only two witnesses in its contest case and get laughed out of court by circuit judge Sanders Sauls. But the Florida supreme court, again, came to the rescue, saying, in effect, that the Gore team didn't need to prove anything after all to get what it wanted in the contest case.

This is jurisprudence as partisan gamesmanship, and some of the strongest pieces in the collection are those ripping the Florida supreme court. It is important to remember that this extraordinary provocation is what prompted the U.S. Supreme Court to get involved in Florida at all. A favorite liberal talking point is that conservative justices are supposed to be in favor of "state rights," but—lo and behold!—intervened in this state matter anyway. Yet it's not so simple. There was a dispute between two state bodies—a legislature and a supreme court—in which a federal constitutional question was implicated, because Article II of the U.S. Constitution says presidential electors are to be chosen in a manner determined by the legislature. Rather than trampling on the State of Florida, the U.S. Supreme Court was vindicating Florida election law, as written by the legislature.

■

One can only conclude that the Supreme Court did the right thing for the wrong reason.

■



In light of this, the "Perry Mason" moment in the Florida controversy came during oral argument in the second U.S. Supreme Court case, when Gore lawyer David Boies admitted that it would have been impermissible for the legislature to write after-the-fact rules of the sort the Florida supreme court had fashioned. Here was a moment of clarity: Not only did the analogy point out the absurdity of what was happening in Florida—imagine the *legislature* changing the rules every week or so to favor Bush!—it showed that the Gore team was contending that the state supreme court had a right to legislate above and beyond that of the legislature itself. Boies might as well have removed Article II from the breast pocket of his rumpled suit and torn it to shreds. The U.S. Supreme Court had little choice but to overturn the Florida court, although its reasoning in its hasty per curiam decision was so shabby, one can only conclude that the Court did the right thing for the wrong reason.

In order to get seven justices roughly on the same page, the Court struck down on equal-protection grounds the statewide recount ordered by the Florida court. Since the standards would have differed from county to county—or, as Boies helpfully admitted in oral argument, even from vote counter to vote counter—some votes would have been treated more equally than others. But by this logic, the Florida election system—using different vote-tabulating technologies, with different levels of accuracy—was unconstitutional from the beginning. The political imperative of getting those seven votes forced the Court away from its stronger Article II reasoning, which was embraced by Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, and Thomas in a concurring opinion. The weakness of the equal-protection argument has helped create an odor around the case, as the Left—joined by principled conservatives—has picked away at the weaknesses of the per curiam decision.

The important thing, however, is that the U.S. Supreme Court, forced into a messy political controversy by the Florida court, kept Florida election law from being changed after the fact to serve the interests of one party to an election dispute and prevented the presidential race from getting plunged further into chaos by the incompetent and partisan Florida supreme court. Yes, several of the justices got their argument wrong (by embracing, by the way, the sort of equal-protection jurisprudence liberals usually applaud). But, in light of the stakes involved, maybe it's best to conclude simply, as Jake Tapper might put it: Whatever. **NR**

Dynastic Overdrive

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

Hostage to Fortune: The Letters of Joseph P. Kennedy, edited by Amanda Smith (Viking, 764 pp., $39.95)

AFTER Eleanor Roosevelt's funeral at Hyde Park in 1962, the mourners gathered at her son John's house. Arthur Schlesinger—who had flown up from Washington with President and Mrs. Kennedy to attend the service—later recalled the scene. "Thinking of the young Roosevelts," Schlesinger wrote, "lost suddenly in middle age, and of the young Kennedys, so sure and purposeful, one perceived an historic contrast, a dynastic change, like the Plantagenets giving way to the Yorks."

All dynasties end in bitterness, for the simple reason that they end. But do they not begin in bitterness as well? Shakespeare's Henry Bolingbroke, the first Lancastrian to mount the throne, is embittered by his treatment at the hands of Richard II, the last of the Plantagenets. Franklin Roosevelt got his dynastic revenge on the Harvard men who'd blackballed him at the Porcellian Club by becoming the second Roosevelt to win the White House. All of this, of course, was before W. emerged to avenge the bitterness of Poppy's defeat by terminating the reign of Clinton-Gore.

In *Hostage to Fortune*, Amanda Smith's compilation of her grandfather's correspondence, the bitterness that drove Joseph P. Kennedy to create America's preeminent 20th-century political dynasty is abundantly evident. The old man was bitter about lots of things, even before he was old. He was bitter that the King and Queen didn't send a letter of condolence after his daughter Kathleen's death. He was bitter about the way Walter Lippmann criticized him while he was ambassador to England. He was bit-

Mr. Beran is the author of *The Last Patrician: Bobby Kennedy and the End of American Aristocracy*.

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ter that FDR went behind his back to conduct a secret correspondence with Winston Churchill. He was bitter about the way his alma mater, Harvard, treated him. (Kennedy was booed by classmates at his 25th reunion, and an eagerly anticipated honorary degree was not forthcoming.) He was bitter about the Catholic hierarchy, which he thought insufficiently supportive of Jack's presidential ambitions:

> I think the less I see of clergy and the hierarchy, the longer I will live and the happier I will be. Their attitude towards a family that has done as much for the Church as I think we have was nothing short of a disgrace. . . . I am disgusted. . . . I will never forgive or forget.

As he aged, Kennedy said he disliked "more intensely than ever those who should have helped and didn't." He told a friend in 1961, "I am not like my older son [Jack] who makes up to the people who attack him. When I have a bad experience, I remember it forever. It is very bad, I realize, and I know I should be more charitable in my old age, but I seem to get worse instead of better."

The bitterness may not have been pretty, but it was in some ways understandable. The familiar tragedies become freshly overwhelming in the letters and telegrams that Smith, a graduate student at Harvard, has assembled. In May 1944, Kennedy's oldest son, Joe Jr., wearing the uniform of an American naval officer, escorted Kathleen "Kick" Kennedy to her wedding to Billy Hartington, the oldest son of the Duke of Devonshire. Three months later Kennedy received the Naval Department telegram informing him that his son was missing in action. In 1948, Kick herself died in a plane crash, and was buried at Chatsworth, the Devonshires' ancestral seat. A *Boston Globe* reporter tracked Kennedy to a Paris hotel room and over the telephone gave him the news of his daughter's death. Decades later Smith discovered, at the bottom of a drawer, the "crumpled scrap" on which the former ambassador had recorded his thoughts:

> No one who ever knew her didn't feel that life was much better that minute. And . . . we know so little about the next world that we must think that they wanted just such a wonderful girl for themselves. We must not feel sorry for her but for ourselves. . . . [W]ritten by me ½ hr after notified of Kick's death.

The scrap is one of the many documents Smith has brought to light in her valuable reconstruction of the life of an American tycoon. The largest—and most noteworthy—part of the book documents Kennedy's service as ambassador to the Court of St. James's between 1938 and 1940. President Roosevelt gave Kennedy the job, and Kennedy's diaries provide memorable glimpses of his boss at work, ruling his empire with the easy nonchalance of a beneficent Caesar. FDR's purposes are often difficult to fathom, but surely his decision to send Kennedy to London at the tail end of the '30s ranks among his more mysterious. True, Kennedy had made a great deal of money (albeit in somewhat suspicious ways); he had acted as a key fundraiser for FDR's 1932 presidential campaign; he had served as first chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. But in England he was out of his depth, as Roosevelt must have known he would be. Was his appointment merely "a great joke," as Roosevelt reportedly said, "the greatest joke in the world"? Or did he hope to get rid of a man whom some had talked of as a potential successor? If so, the plan worked; the ambassadorship ended Kennedy's public career.

Part of the problem was that the man who had been so discreet in 20 years of shadowy business transactions found himself on the stage of history, and he talked too much. Rather than take refuge in the Delphic syntax that diplomats prefer, Kennedy labored to make his ideas as clear as possible. He spoke of "breaking a precedent of many years' standing" and actually "saying something" in his speeches. The result was disaster. In the tricky period that followed Neville Chamberlain's sacrifice of Czechoslovakia at Munich in September 1938, Kennedy bluntly pushed for appeasement. "It has long been a theory of mine," he told British naval officers in October, "that it is unproductive for

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BY B. BURKE

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both the democratic and dictator countries to widen the divisions now existing between them by emphasizing their differences."

Kennedy's judgments—his sympathy for Chamberlain's policies, his skepticism about Churchill's leadership—proved lamentably wrongheaded. His attempt to use the embassy as a bully pulpit revealed an astonishing callowness, a lack of subtlety that is often apparent in his diplomatic memoranda. In explaining why he thought Hitler's peaceful professions at Munich genuine, he wrote, "In the first place the Nazi party is pretty smart. They have their ear to the ground and . . . they probably learned that there was a heavy ground swell of public opinion in the real German people against the war." That "probably" is priceless.

A pariah in both London and Washington by the time he submitted his resignation to Roosevelt in late 1940, Kennedy responded to the outrage he had provoked by trying to talk his way out of the hole. He ended up committing political suicide. In November 1940 he was quoted in the *Boston Globe* as saying, "Democracy is finished in England. It may be here." Democracy was not finished, of course, but Kennedy's public career was. Indeed, he came close to becoming a caricature of the shallow tycoon of the '30s, the unreflective, philistine millionaire whom Evelyn Waugh satirized in Lord Copper and Rex Mottram. Kennedy's own son wondered at the thinness of his father's intellectual culture. "I've almost never seen him read a serious book," Jack Kennedy marveled to speechwriter Ted Sorensen.

And yet it would be a mistake to reduce him to a caricature. A more mediocre man could never have possessed such sublime bitterness. After the war Kennedy recorded a petulant exchange with Winston Churchill at the racetrack at Hialeah. The former ambassador asked the great man what the war he had helped to lead had accomplished. (As though the effort to destroy Hitler had somehow been a waste of time.) Churchill "turned sharply" to Kennedy and said, "Well, at least, we have our lives." "Not all of us," Kennedy replied.

If bitterness made Kennedy cranky, it also fueled his dynastic drive. He got even with his enemies vicariously, through his sons' successes. Those successes had been carefully planned: Even before the failure of his own career Kennedy had been determined to see them triumph. "My work is my boys," he declared. "It's a strange thing," he wrote Massachusetts congressman John W. McCormack in 1951, "that the only thing that seems to even disturb me is something said about my children. Nothing ever said about me has ever bothered me five minutes. I suppose that is the natural instinct of a parent who has always felt that the success of a family is estimated by their loyalty to one another."

■

'We don't want any losers around here,' Kennedy told the children. 'In this family we want winners.'

■

His own loyalty to his children was profound. "He wasn't around as much as some fathers," Jack Kennedy observed, but "he made his children feel that they were the most important things in the world to him." The flow of paternal letters and telegrams, with their combination of cajolery and love, was constant. To young Jack, who was bright but often lazy, Kennedy wrote:

> I don't want to give the impression that I am a nagger, for goodness knows I think that is the worst thing any parent can be, and I also feel that you know if I didn't really feel you had the goods I would be most charitable in my attitude toward your failings. . . . Aren't you foolish not to get all there is out of what God has given you? . . . Get yourself into shape so that a man can't write a halfway report on you. . . . You have the goods; why not try to show it?

"We don't want any losers around here," Kennedy told the children. "In this family we want winners." But if the pressure to succeed was intense, so too was the encouragement. "This looks good," he wrote Jack about one of his report cards, "so work hard and build yourself up for the rest of your life." "I am impressed with the almost complete turn around you have made in yourself in the last year," Kennedy wrote him a little later; "you know I always felt you had great possibilities and I think now you are starting to avail yourself of them." When Kick Kennedy was under pressure from a number of people—including her mother—not to marry outside the Church, Kennedy let his daughter know that his own love was unconditional. "YOUR CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM WORTHY OF CHESTERTON MAGNIFICENT STOP," he wired her in 1944. "WITH YOUR FAITH IN GOD YOU CANT MAKE A MISTAKE STOP REMEMBER YOU ARE STILL AND ALWAYS WILL BE TOPS WITH ME LOVE = DAD."

Although he disclaimed any desire to influence his sons' positions on issues, Kennedy inevitably influenced their views—sometimes for the better. If bitterness distorted his thinking in some areas, it clarified it in others. Disillusioned by Roosevelt's "conniving mind" and his effort to enlarge the government, he began to question the wisdom of the New Deal approach he had defended so passionately in the 1930s. Writing to young Bobby in 1945, Kennedy said that he feared the "beginning of some form of socialism in this country," with the government "mixing itself more and more into everybody's lives." He also urged Bobby to reread Whittaker Chambers's masterpiece, *Witness*. The old man evidently *had* read some serious books.

In retirement Kennedy was more conservative than either Jack or Bobby, who were just beginning their ascents; they in many respects conformed to the liberal orthodoxies of the postwar period. But Jack's tax-cut proposals and Bobby's ideas about welfare reform suggest that the father's thinking did have some influence on the sons.

On the morning of December 19, 1961, he watched his son board Air Force One at the Palm Beach airport to return to Washington, and then went off to play golf. Later that day he suffered a massive stroke. An invalid during the remaining years of his life, Kennedy lived to see the two older boys murdered and Ted become the uneasy standard-bearer of a flagging family tradition. It was the final misfortune of the embittered dynast to have glimpsed the beginning of the end of the dynasty he had founded. **NR**

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She'll Always Have Paris

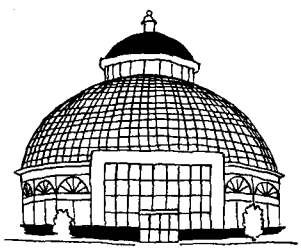
JEFFREY HART

String of Pearls: On the News Beat in New York and Paris, by Priscilla L. Buckley (St. Martin's, 183 pp., $21.95)

I'VE been a friend and colleague of Priscilla Buckley for decades. This will not prevent me from telling the truth about her book.

Its prose is energized by intelligence and concreteness, a claim I will soon validate. It is wonderfully evocative of a time and place. Or, rather, two places, New York and Paris, but mostly Paris. Reading it, I thought of Elliot Paul's *The Last Time I Saw Paris*, Janet Flanner's *Paris Was Yesterday*, Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*.

In his own memoir, however, Hemingway—while celebrating youth and Paris—imposed upon us his most unattractive side. He denigrated, without shame, T. S. Eliot, Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, Ford Madox Ford, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, and many others. Nice guy. But at least he liked Paris.



In contrast, *A String of Pearls* is generous in spirit. Priscilla Buckley loved and still loves the life she evokes here. Because she has a sparkling sense of humor, she also enjoys its frequent absurdities.

Part One deals with her life in New York City between 1944 and 1948. A recent graduate of Smith College, she gained an entry-level job at the United Press wire service. Low pay, long hours, and dingy apartments could not dampen her spirit. This was New York! The capital of the world! Just being there, then, was, as she puts it, "tops." Life had few cares and was all possibility.

Though she does not put it this way, she captures a sense of New York in the '40s as an extension of a Silver Age that began in the '20s and ended around 1960. The grim years of the Depression were gone. The war had been won. The great musicals were on Broadway, and sophisticated jazz was in the air. Yet to appear were Elvis, the Beatles, the Kennedys, Abbie Hoffman, and Charles Manson. Miss Buckley conveys the spirit of this time with carefully polished—one might say pearl-like—anecdotes. One of my favorite characters in this part of the book is one Johnny Zischaung, who "had been born with a stump instead of a left hand":

> It was only in his cups that Johnny came to life. He played a mean piano despite his disability, hitting a steady bass with the stump of his left hand while his right hand moved with astonishing agility over the usually tinny keyboards of the uprights to be found in many Greenwich Village apartments. He wrote songs and was the beery life of many an impromptu postwork party in the Village, where most of us lived in dirty, crowded, cramped apartments. One of Johnny's songs I remember—I can almost hear the thump-thump of its beat today—was entitled "The Blonde and the Yokel on the Uptown Local."

Somewhat later, Johnny, then in Paris and no doubt drunk, fell into the Seine and drowned. This is sad, but perhaps also artistically perfect. I recall Fitzgerald's wonderful sentence about a friend who was mortally beaten in a speakeasy and crawled home to the Princeton Club to die.

In 1953, Priscilla Buckley went to work as a writer and reporter for UPI in Paris. Her affection for this city and things French is contagious. She describes even those who played only minor roles in her life with crystallizing vividness.

> The greengrocer from around the corner with the Chinese long fingernails and the angora sweater he wears winter and summer, and the twin of which his wife seems to be perpetually knitting in the back of their store, picks up his truck for the early morning visit to Les Halles, the central Paris market, to gather the day's fruits and vegetables. He promises to save a good head of lettuce for me.

Miss Buckley's Parisian patriotism is a matter of French style, ambience, and

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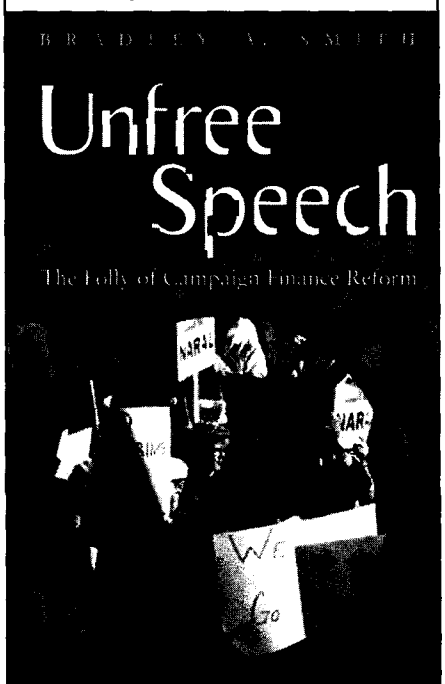

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personality. French life is full of the unexpected because France is *not* America, and the French are so *French*.

A principal character here is her secondhand Hillman-Minx convertible, which, because of a broken part, is in the habit of suddenly stopping and freezing in the midst of the heaviest Paris traffic. She meets a lot of people this way, though not the car's manufacturer in London—who cannot, or will not, send a new part.

■

Miss Buckley's wit has a kind of worldly French intelligence.

■

People who love Paris often express this by the music of street names. Hemingway does this beautifully in *The Sun Also Rises*. Miss Buckley uses the device admirably, but punctures it humorously at the end:

> I drive down the Avenue Henri Martin to the Trocadéro, down Avenue Woodrow Wilson, and hit the Seine at the Place de l'Alma. Every day in the last fortnight as I have made this trip to report for the 7 A.M. shift the sky has become a smidgen lighter. Now it is almost full daylight. I drive past le Grand Palais and just beyond it am clipped by a truck driver barreling across the Alexandre III bridge, trying to beat a light.

In an example of how journalists can create an international celebrity, Miss Buckley describes the manufacture of the "Angel of Dien Bien Phu." At the peak of that disastrous battle, she was perusing a long wire story about the fighting:

> Way down in the story, about the twenty-fifth or twenty-eighth take, AFP [a French wire service] gave the names of the medical evacuation team now stranded in the doomed fort: two doctors and a nurse, Lt. Geneviève de Gallard-Terraube.
>
> I gave a whoop. "There's a woman in Dien Bien Phu," I hollered to Nick, and put out a bulletin: "French Air Force nurse trapped in Dien Bien Phu." We hit the story hard. By morning we had the wounded calling her an "angel of mercy." Soon the world was hearing about an angel "who does not wear wings or a halo, but borrowed army fatigues and a steel helmet." And so was born the Angel of Dien Bien Phu, who became instant headline news the world over.

Miss Buckley's astringency in these sentences is an important part of her wit, which has, indeed, a kind of worldly French intelligence.

I would delight in retelling her many luminous anecdotes here, but I will permit you the pleasure of discovering them in the original. In 1956 she left Paris to join the fledgling NATIONAL REVIEW, and became managing editor not long after. At NR, she ran the office, wrote and edited, and was a remarkably stabilizing presence. Any magazine, any collection of writers, is bound to have a generous share of marginal personalities. Priscilla, with her buoyant soul, optimism that never fractured, and strong common sense, kept the ship plowing through the waves. But she never really left Paris. As she writes at the end of her book, "I close the door leaving the clatter and the clamor behind. It's a permanent good-bye to newspaper days, but not to Paris, not ever to Paris." **NR**

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Bitter Pill

DAVID SEIDENWURM

PC, M.D.: How Political Correctness Is Corrupting Medicine, by Sally Satel (Basic, 285 pp., $27)

PSYCHIATRIC patients literally running the asylum, university professors calling for socialism as a public-health measure, respected journals hurling accusations of "medical racism": Sally Satel describes all this and more in her provocative and fascinating survey of the infiltration of the American health-care system by political correctness.

Satel, a psychiatrist at Yale University School of Medicine who works with inner-city drug addicts, first surveys the triumphs of the public-health movement since the 19th century, beginning with its victories on sanitation issues—things like clean water, indoor plumbing, and uncontaminated foods—and continuing with such measures as pasteurization, vaccinations, and antibiotics, which enabled rapid progress toward the eradication of infectious diseases. Public-health measures helped bring syphilis and tuberculosis under control, and—in the postwar period—improved the overall health of the populace through valuable campaigns to encourage people to quit smoking, wear seat belts, cut down on cholesterol, get more exercise, and monitor their blood pressure. These successes showed that a reformist impulse—combined with rigorous science—could produce tremendous advances in health, safety, and quality of life.

But in the 1990s, this lesson mutated into the "social production" theory of disease, which holds that diseases may be caused, not by biology or lifestyle choices, but by economic oppression and its resulting deprivations. As a result, the National Institutes of Health sometimes awards grants for the study of

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discrimination, racism, "classism," and "powerlessness."

Satel argues that this is not merely a harmless distraction, because it diverts resources from research that could actually improve people's lives. Worse, telling the public that poor health is the result of victimization rather than unhealthy behavior undercuts any incentive to quit smoking, drink less, eat better, or exercise more. The shift within the medical profession from an emphasis on individual responsibility in matters of health to a doctrine of victimization and helplessness is a pervasive theme in *PC, M.D.*

To laymen, Satel's chapter on nursing will be especially shocking. Nurses now perform more complex tasks than ever, yet the profession is eroding from within: Admissions policies at nursing schools are bizarre and lacking in standards; professors at these schools are oblivious to scientific method. The result of this faulty education is, predictably, a large cadre of demoralized and inadequately trained nurses.

The education of physicians has also been compromised by politically correct shibboleths. Early feminist attacks on medical education may have been based on legitimate objections, such as the fact that women weren't allowed into top-flight medical schools. But these grievances are a thing of the past—and have been replaced with sheer cant and a rhetoric of imagined victimization. Surgical approaches to breast cancer, for example, are said to be rooted in misogyny, and medical hierarchies based on training and education are described as a mere "patriarchy."

Even refereed medical journals are not safe from the hazards of PC. Satel discusses a headline-grabbing *New England Journal of Medicine* report from February 1999, which alleged racial bias in the treatment of heart disease, with blacks routinely receiving inadequate care. ABC News, *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Economist*, and other mainstream media outlets uncritically reported the study's inflammatory conclusion. Ted Koppel introduced *Nightline*'s coverage of the study by mentioning James Byrd, the black man who was dragged to his death in Jasper, Texas. Predictably, the eventual revelation that the data were flawed by statistical legerdemain of a particularly obvious kind—in fact, the study showed no significant difference in the treatment given black and white patients—didn't make the papers. Research suggesting a relationship between racism and hypertension in blacks was almost as widely cited—and every bit as bogus.

Satel also makes a convincing case against the excesses of the anti-psychiatry "consumer survivor" movement, which consists of former psychiatric patients who define their treatment as more detrimental than their underlying illnesses. Unfortunately, Satel's argument in support of the involuntary hospitalization or medication of some patients with severe mental illness—persuasive, as far as it goes—leaves some important questions unanswered: Why should the state have the right to medicate an individual against his will? Why should someone concerned with individual liberty accept and encourage this practice?

The case is easiest to make in connection with criminal conduct, where it is certainly more humane (not to mention cheaper) to treat an underlying psychiatric disorder than to incarcerate a psychotic. Similarly, many homeless people are actually mentally ill, their psychiatric disorders frequently complicated by alcohol or drug abuse. They need compulsory treatment and drug testing as much as they need housing. It is certainly reasonable in such cases to require cooperation with treatment as a condition for receiving public assistance. Satel does a fine job of explaining why involuntary treatment may be advisable in such circumstances, but she leaves it to the reader to discern the general principles that ought to govern such decisions.

Satel hammers her point home again and again: Political correctness in health care is not just a harmless phase that naïve undergraduates can go through before they grow up and have to face medical realities. It is, rather, a serious public-health threat in itself, because *it is costing lives*. Minorities are told that oppression, not smoking or a fatty diet, is responsible for their high rates of heart disease; nurses take courses in therapeutic touch, not heart rhythms; and NIH funding is diverted to politically fashionable diseases. As a result, the proud legacy of the public-health movement is being squandered —with almost no protest from the media or the medical profession itself.

Public awareness of the extent to which political correctness has infected the health professions is the first step toward cleaning up this dangerous mess. *PC, M.D.* provides a much-needed disinfectant—and everyone in medicine knows how effective that simple act can be. **NR**

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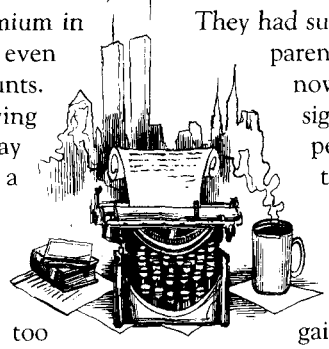
■ CITY DESK ■

Flip Sides

RICHARD BROOKHISER

THE trouble began when my wife and I went to a thrift shop for books on Crosby Street. It is one of several thrift shops in the city run by Housing Works, a charity for homeless AIDS patients, and like most gay enterprises, it is attractive and well designed. The AIDS cult is one of the few established religions in New York, and people of all orientations and degrees of sobriety donate to Housing Works, just as royal mistresses in the Middle Ages built chapels in honor of St. Ursula and the 11,000 virgins. This particular shop, in addition to books, offers an extensive selection of old LPs, which gave Jeanne the idea to cull our record collection.

The thought was mother to the deed, and the next day we set to work. Flat is about as easy as it gets to store, but space is at such a premium in New York apartments that even records take up serious amounts. We calculated that by giving our unwanted records away we could liberate a shelf and a half. Rollback never accomplished so much.



A few brands escaped the burning, either because they were too precious or too eccentric to part with, or because we didn't expect to find the substitute CD at Tower Records anytime soon. Artwork was a factor in some reprieves. *The Joy of Belly Dancing,* by George Abdo and his Flames of Araby Orchestra, has a babe on the cover who shows more cleavage than Denise Rich. Jeanne, who had been a fan of Glenn Gould since her adolescence, saved his debut album, the famous recording of the *Goldberg Variations*, with 30 unposed sepia shots, taken at a recording session, of his almost painfully ingenuous ecstasies.

But how many more fell by the wayside. An ancient *Scheherezade*, whose bright and ethnically typecast jacket would now be banned on three continents. Bernstein, slashing with his baton. Bob Dylan, young enough to be carded. People you never heard of, recording for Nonesuch, the label that was its own music-appreciation course. My first album of Chopin: The pianist rated a B, but the cover art was A+: a shy smiling princess, painted by Winterhalter. So M. Chopin's students must have glowed when the exquisite foreigner, as polite as he was poetic, praised their fingering.

■

I studied species counterpoint, just like young Wolfgang and young Ludwig, though to less effect.

■

Many a column of liner notes was scuffed and worn, and many a cardboard jacket corner was dinged by drops and shoves. But the records had survived multiple moves, from ranch house to dorm to apartment, stacked in liquor boxes and loaded into the trunks of cars. They had survived the cars, even the parents who drove the cars, but now they would be consigned to the souk of other people's lives. The wares that pleased a teenager in the Johnson administration would have to summon their faded charms to tempt the worldly bargain hunters of Bush II. But the worst of it (did I mention that this was upsetting?) was that we were not chucking our records simply because they were as old and big as the Soviet Union. The real reason for their dismissal was that we had not played them in years.

Part of the reason is technological. The invention of the compact disc made the act of putting a record on a turntable seem as fussy and pointless as sharpening a quill to indite a letter. No more whisking dust off the needle, no more worrying about the damage that an old needle might be doing to fragile grooves. But the biggest change was not in science, but in me. I don't listen (never to records, seldom to CDs or tapes) because I don't think to anymore.

This was not a predictable outcome. For 20-some years, I was intimate with spit valves, pitch pipes, and the metal tongues, long and flicking, of metronomes. I did my time with Hanon and Czerny; I led my college singing group at mixers of bellowing drunks; I studied species counterpoint, just like young Wolfgang and young Ludwig, though to less effect. Certainly New York, of all places, offers the opportunity to keep up. I know a couple of music reviewers who gorge on concerts like gluttons. I can't keep that pace, but I have my seat at chamber-music concerts, and in the andantes I still try mentally to take down the bass line in C major, at least until it modulates beyond the dominant.

But when I come home I shut the door. When I sit down to write or read the silence proclaims itself. Professionalism tells me that as I am being paid to find or parse these words, I'd better concentrate. It also tells me, more damningly, you could never play with Alfred Deller or Bob Marley; stick with your strong suit. Is it, finally, one of the signs of accumulating years, along with too much back hair and not enough head hair, that one redefines certain stimuli as distractions? As irritations? These were the hard thoughts the tasteful angels of mercy engendered.

But every record has a flip side. Some aficionado, whether a prosperous burgher like myself, or one of the peculiar 20-year-olds who flock to New York like swallows, will find David Oistrakh playing Mozart, or Joan Baez in her angel phase, even before she discovered Ho Chi Minh. He will acquire them, moreover, with all the retro sheen and hiss of vinyl. He will study the jackets like an anthropologist; perhaps one image will prompt a paper on the social construction of genius. Maybe he will learn from liner notes, as I did, what Martin Luther thought of Josquin des Préz.

Habits, meanwhile, are acts, which means they can be unmade by other acts. It is Jeanne's idea to fill that shelf and a half with CDs, and then to play them. To mark the intention, she bought three Haydn quartets the day after we had heard a performance of "The Rider." Way to go. **NR**

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■ FILM ■

Dangerous Game

JOHN SIMON

THE French filmmaker Jean-Jacques Annaud has had a checkered career. His first film, *Black and White in Color* (1976), about inept colonial warfare between the French and Germans in 1915 West Africa, was an absolute gem. Ranging from drolly farcical to sharply satirical, it was comedy at its brainiest and most biting. His next, *Hothead*, a comedy about two competing factory soccer teams (and much else), was intelligent, but slightly offside.

After that, Annaud went commercial. *Quest for Fire*, based on one of J. H. Rosny's once-popular novels about prehistoric tribal wars and caveman romance, benefited from the linguistic contribution of Anthony Burgess, movement-consulting by Desmond Morris, and some nice woolly mammoths. But the film's authenticity was marred by the filmmaker's anachronistic sentimentality. Later, Annaud's version of *The Name of the Rose*, softened by a preposterous happy ending, misfired.

The Bear, about an orphaned bear cub's coming of age, told from the bear's point of view, had a lot of charm, not least in the sounds of nature substituting for dialogue, but could not escape a soupçon of Disneyism.

The Lover, based on Marguerite Duras's self-serving novel about coming of sexual age in prewar Vietnam, had some wonderfully authentic touches, but the central love story failed to ignite. *Seven Years in Tibet* was a glossy picture postcard about strange doings in a forbidden city, but emerged as a bit of a Lhasa apso. It also glossed over some queasy political questions.

Now comes ***Enemy at the Gates***, centering on the duel to the death of two master snipers, young Vasily Zaitsev, a historical figure, and the German Major König, who may or may not have been. Vasily was a shepherd boy from the Urals, whose grandfather trained him to shoot by hunting wolves; König, if he existed, ran a prestigious school for Nazi sharpshooters. In the middle of one of World War II's most crucial battles, the six-month siege of Stalingrad with perhaps as many as 2 million dead, these men are locked in mortal combat, seeing each other only, if at all, through their telescopic rifle sights.

It is a curious love–hate story between Vasily and König, simple, barely literate shepherd and gold-tipped-cigarette-smoking aristocrat. Each is admiringly fascinated by the other, studying his minutest quirks, and trying to shoot him dead. Each man does mighty devastation in the enemy lines, and tracks the other through spectacular stratagems across eccentric battlegrounds and from bizarre hiding places. But, until the very end, neither can nail the other.

The inferno of war—burning and smoking Stalingrad in jagged ruins, a German air attack on Russian reinforcements crossing the Volga in boats, and assorted other horrors—is depicted spectacularly in the best Spielbergian fashion. Annaud, however, not content with this epic canvas, insists on adding a gratuitous love triangle involving the relationship between the ingenuous Vasily and Danilov, a brilliant but neurotic officer and propagandist, who turns Vasily into a morale-boosting national hero. Both fall in love with Tanya, a university-educated young Jewish girl who, thanks to her knowledge of German, has a cushy office job, but yearns to go out to fight and avenge her slaughtered Jewish parents. Because Danilov, too, is Jewish, he hopes to win Tanya; she, however, prefers Vasily, with melodramatic consequences.

There are some fairly stereotypical figures: the brave Russian mother, the grizzled soldier who has seen it all, the valiant young Russian boy who shines König's boots and pretends to be a German sympathizer, but spies for his beloved Vasily. And there are some worst yet, including Bob Hoskins as a menacing but comic Khrushchev, made more comic by (inadvertently) mispronouncing his own name. More subtly, the unembellished shadow of Stalin hovers over all.

The acting is consistently good, with Joseph Fiennes a nicely unpredictable but

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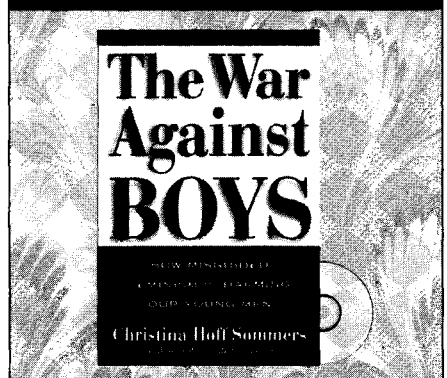

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ultimately noble Danilov, Rachel Weisz a spunky but tenderhearted Tanya, and Jude Law as a star-quality-notwithstanding believable Vasily. Best of all is Ed Harris's König, able to make the film's most complex character entirely believable. Only Gabriel Marshall-Thomson, as the shoeshine boy, is too adorable and, even for the most naïve moviegoers, presages a sticky end. Also distracting is the unrelentingly god-awful score (by James Horner, who should be made to stand in a corner for at least a month), plus a lot of rather questionable dialogue by Annaud and Alain Godard. Robert Fraisse's cinematography contributes powerfully to a flawed but by no means unimpressive movie.

■ If anyone tells you he could follow ***Memento***, be assured he is a liar. Or worse yet, a *Memento* cultist, trying to turn a clinker into a classic. The writer-director Christopher Nolan has taken what seems to be a fairly unremarkable film noir, sliced it to ribbons, and more or less arbitrarily scrambled the pieces.

The insurance investigator Leonard Shelby, after seeing his wife raped and murdered, gets a knock on the head and loses his short-term memory. Everything before the blow he remembers clearly, but now he forgets everything that happens to him after 15 minutes or so. I doubt if such a condition actually exists, but that is the least problem here.

The film moves both forward and (mainly) backward in time, ostensibly to simulate how Leonard discovers things. To compensate for his sieve-like memory, he depends on annotated Polaroids, scraps of paper handed him, information (possibly false and certainly conflicting) tendered by strangers, and most of all, tattoos on his torso and limbs. Particularly irritating is that neither the backward nor the forward movement of the story is clearly indicated (in *Betrayal*, with a similar two-way movement, Harold Pinter gives you dates). And several scenes recur as bothersomely as a party bore whom you cannot shake.

Nolan does everything he can to confound you. There are black-and-white scenes telling the barely related story of another man with like memory loss. But some, though not all, of Leonard's past is also in monochrome. There are subliminal flashes of who-knows-what. I never figured out whether the barmaid Natalie (with whom the grieving husband shacks up) and the mysterious Teddy (who may be cop or killer) are friends or foes. The short-term memory lasts 15 minutes, yet when Natalie and a barfly spit, in full view, into his beer, Leonard drinks it without demur.

When chased by a murderous character, Leonard forgets whether he is the chased or the chaser—funny, but phony as a three-dollar bill. Under the circumstances, it is hard to care about our hero, however ably the gifted Guy Pearce portrays him. As Natalie, Carrie-Anne Moss is good if she is meant to be antipathetic; less so if not. As Teddy, Joe Pantoliano scores either way.

If ever a movie was smartass, *Memento* is it. Christopher Nolan made it from a story by his brother, Jonathan. Brotherly love, like all good things, can be carried too far. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Unfree Speech: The Folly of Campaign Finance Reform, by Bradley A. Smith (Princeton, 286 pp., $26.95)

SEN. DICK DURBIN called Bradley Smith a "nihilist." Commentators compared him to David Duke and the Unabomber. And then-Vice President Al Gore opposed his boss's nomination of Smith to the Federal Election Commission because "the last thing we need is an FEC commissioner who publicly questions not only the constitutionality of proposed [campaign-finance] reforms, but also the constitutionality of current limitations."

But question he does. Smith passed the Senate's grilling and today serves as one of six FEC commissioners. In *Unfree Speech*, he argues that "almost everything the American people know, or think they know, about campaign finance is wrong."

Smith debunks many common assumptions. Money buys elections? Then why in 1994, in the "conservative revolution" that saw the highest congressional turnover rate of the 1990s, did the 34 Republicans who defeated Democratic incumbents spend—on average—two-thirds of the amounts spent by their opponents? Empirical studies also contradict the assumption that campaign donations buy votes and access.

Smith considers current campaign-finance proposals plainly unconstitutional, and warns that the regulation of political speech will ultimately burden underdogs. Instead of additional restrictions, Smith advocates the vigorous enforcement of existing laws.

The stakes, Smith writes, are high. Because it is "based on premises that are at odds with the traditional notions of equality and free speech embedded in the Constitution," he says, "campaign finance 'reform' poses the greatest threat to free speech in America since the Alien and Sedition Acts two hundred years ago." That's exactly why *Unfree Speech* is a must-read for anyone wanting to make sense of the campaign-finance debate. —KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ

John Paul II: A Personal Portrait of the Pope and the Man, by Raymond Flynn, with Robin Moore and James Vrabel (St. Martin's, 224 pp., $22.95)

FLYNN, the charming former mayor of Boston and ex-ambassador to the Vatican, tells us very candidly what his book is not: It is not a biography, or an analysis, or a polemic about the current Pope's place in history. Flynn views it, rather, as a profile based on his own experiences with Pope John Paul II, dating back to a 1969 visit to Boston of then-Cardinal Karol Wojtyla.

Traditionally, the writer of a profile must at least affect a certain distance from his subject; there is none of that here. What Flynn has produced instead is a love letter. He dwells on particular acts and gestures of the Pope in a manner that cannot fail to impress upon the reader the complete sincerity of Flynn's love for John Paul II. The Pope consoles a Boston woman whose son has recently died in a car crash; offers to help pay for medical care for Flynn's own son; pleads with the governor of Missouri for the life of a convicted murderer.

What comes through especially clearly is the Pope's sense of humor. Flynn says the Pope has the timing of a night-club comic and a winsome habit of laughing at his own jokes. The glimpses Flynn offers make his book a good addition to the growing shelf of literature on John Paul II. —MICHAEL POTEMRA

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Hard Lessons From *Traffic*?

NEW YORK, MARCH 16

THE drug czar-elect in the movie *Traffic* has decided to look at the grit of drug trade and drug addiction first hand, to which end he forages about Tijuana and has a near overdose. Groggy from what he has seen, he accosts his staff on his posh private plane going back to Washington. Michael Douglas does one of his jut-jawed scenes, with which the movie is replete, and says he wants *all* ideas ventilated. Everything. The director, who is headed for Oscarland, wisely decided to cut away before any new ideas were in fact proffered, because the drift of the movie—like the drift of public policy in the matter of drugs—is: Continue, at breathless speed, to accomplish . . . nothing.

At a recent press conference, Press Secretary Ari Fleischer was asked if the president had seen the movie.

Answer: Yes.

Have there been any policy changes on the matter of drugs? Mr. Bush has said that in his view (personally tested), treatment is more effective than punishment. To this end, when talking about the subject with the president of Mexico, the idea was evidently tossed around to concentrate less on interdicting supply than on "reducing demand." How do you do that?

Well, of course, the conventional way is to punish those who make up the demand. If Johnny is thinking of buying some coke, the idea of a couple of years in jail is supposed to deter him, and certainly does deter some prospective users. The movie seen by the president glancingly acknowledges the point, but its dramatic focus isn't on Socratic monologues that weigh the lure of a snort over against the horror of a prison term. The focus, quite understandably, is on young people who would do anything for another fix and, in the movie, do.

Another deterrent is to expose the addict or near-addict to a depiction of what it is like to suffer the thralldom of drugs. Five recovering users in California were interviewed in Phoenix House, the fine drug-recovery center, after being shown the movie. They discussed their own itineraries en route to addiction, and one 17-year-old said that if she had seen this movie, she probably would have found the strength to knock off from drugs.

And then, of course, what is universally acknowledged as necessary is the loyalty and devotion of parents. But, for the record, this didn't help the *Traffic* people one bit. Michael Douglas's 16-year-old daughter repaid parental concern not at all, adding wrinkles every few minutes to her father's concerned brow.

The movie ends with a Little League baseball scene that suggests that there is a ray or two of sun out there waiting for those who hope hard enough. The baseball scene comes right after an Alcoholics Anonymous-type sequence, in which the daughter stands up before her fellow addicts, giving details of her ordeal and the steps she thinks useful in combating the temptation.

But the dramatic theme of the movie isn't about recovery; rather it is on hopelessness at every level, the hopelessness of the addict and of laws and mores that collapse under the pressure of money. "How can Mexico's drug lords *begin* to match the resources of the United States?" one naïf asks. He is abruptly stopped by the war-weary official who says the drug lords are ten times as powerful as their adversaries. What they have working for them is Americans willing to pay $50 billion for their products.

Recent figures advise us that hard-core cocaine users ten years ago numbered 3.5 million. The figure today: 3.5 million. The key question then becomes: How many of those who ten years ago used coke are still doing so? Some continue to use the drug, some are cured, and some are dead. What is the interrelationship between public policy and the incidence of cure? What would that 3.5 million figure be if laws against coke were relaxed? What would it be if the $20 billion now spent on deterrence were instead spent on therapy? Ten years ago heroin users numbered 600,000. Now it is 980,000. What was the drug czar doing that let that happen? Did we run out of money? Manifestly the heroin makers have not run out of money.

One does not sense, in the new administration, any dramatic insights on how to redirect policies that would seem to have failed. President Bush is not, by background or disposition, a natural leader for a dramatic change in policy. Yes, by all means reduce the demand. And yes, it would help prospective drug takers to see the movie, *Traffic*. On the other hand, it would be prudent not to view it repeatedly. That would make the viewer reach out for any drug in sight.

"Gee—some of these seem to be an invasion of privacy."

Feeling One's Way on Finance Reform

NEW YORK, MARCH 20

IT isn't exactly correct that conservatives oppose any limitations on political spending on the grounds that such limitations are unconstitutional slights on the First Amendment. Oddball interpretations of the Constitution are the licensed property of constitutional ultramontanists, the kind of people who grew up on the mother's milk of the American Civil Liberties Union, or Americans United. They're the people who tell you that because the Constitution guarantees the separation of church and state, you can't have a benediction at a public high-school graduation ceremony. Or that because free speech is guaranteed, you can show *Deep Throat* at the corner movie theater. There are many conservatives who say that kind of thing is spinach and the hell with it. Indeed the current discussion over political financing almost begs for a confrontation with the Supreme Court, and is probably headed for that, whichever course is adopted by Congress.

Sen. Mitch McConnell, who is a persuasive advocate of leaving things as they are, summed up his position on

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Monday in the initial debate: "The only way to really get at the core of this problem, if senators believe that the influence of money in politics is so pernicious, is to change the First Amendment. . . . The nub of the problem is you can't do most of those things as long as the First Amendment remains as it is."

But that isn't so, as we have seen. There is now, in the law, and okayed by the Supreme Court in *Buckley* v. *Valeo*, a provision that limits individual contributions to an election candidate to $1,000. If the First Amendment absolutists were correct in what they say, that 1974 law would have been struck down as unconstitutional. There is one out that the ACLU types have. It is that although the Supreme Court okayed the restrictions in *Buckley*, it oughtn't to have done so. And an extension of the restrictions proposed in McCain-Feingold is going to provoke the Court into doing what it should have done back in 1976, which is to rule against any restrictions on the expression of political opinion.

Sen. McConnell does useful work in insisting that the polemical scene should be described in terms of cultural reality. It isn't just the GOP's television ad quarreling with the Democrats'. The dominating voices in the political forums are the media. Consider us book-writers. Receive an unfavorable review in the *New York Times* for your latest book and there isn't enough money in the bank of the wealthiest publisher to contend effectively against such a review.

Applied nationwide, you have political candidates who claim a right to struggle against unfriendly and potentially lethal adversarial commentary by the editorialist or television commentator. Such a person, it is reasonably claimed, has got to get air to breathe by publishing issue advertisements, and these cannot be financed by $1,000 donations by individuals. You need the amalgamated strength of larger entities. That translates into soft money.

In the end, the fear is of votes that reflect vested interests. The problem of modern government is that most of what is truly influential, in the world of positive law, is traceable to government. In a better-ordered world, it would not so greatly matter what Congress decides on this or that issue, because Congress would forswear the conceit of regulating our lives. But as long as Congress has the taxing authority, combined with the right to tax progressively, there is a need to fight back, and in this case, the weapon being used by opponents of McCain-Feingold is a view of the First Amendment's protections that is historically disreputable.

Execution Days Ahead?

NEW YORK, MARCH 23

A NEW play opens next week in New York on Nuremberg justice. The four defendants (including star Maximilian Schell) are judges who collaborated in the Nazi enterprise. The prosecutor meets privately with the chief defendant, just before the curtain closes, and says, "I'll make you a wager." The defendant, having just been sentenced to life in prison, isn't in the mood for wagers, so he just grunts, whereupon the prosecutor says, "I bet you people are out on the streets in five years." A doom-sounding voice comes in as the curtain closes, divulging that that is exactly what happened to those defendants. In the big trial, 1945–1946, only Rudolph Hess actually spent his whole life in prison; most who get lifetime sentences (there are exceptions: Sirhan Sirhan's eleventh appeal has just been denied) are let out after a while, but whenever this happens, there is someone there to complain. Their voices are heard on Broadway, in 2001.

That is a situation that strengthens the hand of those who believe in capital punishment, one strength of which act is precisely the finality of the judgment. But abolitionists gain strength every day, and agitation on the subject crops up in the media and in the mail weekly. *First Things*, the lively monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life, enters the fray in the current issue with an essay by the august Avery Dulles. He is the son of John Foster Dulles, who, to the dismay of his Presbyterian parents, entered the Catholic priesthood as a young man and, last month, was made a cardinal. In between, he developed his enormous skills as a theologian, and now he writes, "Catholicism & Capital Punishment."

It goes almost without saying that Cardinal Dulles opposes capital punishment, but in his learned essay on the subject he leads ambivalent Catholic opinion less successfully than he no doubt hoped. The background is this: American Catholic bishops, echoing the pronounced views of Pope John Paul II, have opined against capital punishment, but with less than the two-thirds vote required to make for an "official" episcopal statement.

What Dulles does is examine the four grounds traditionally cited in defense of capital punishment. Rehabilitation was one of these, by which was meant that, as was the case of the thief who died at the right hand of Christ on a cross, corporal punishment can bring on penitence. But that argument doesn't fly very high in a secular age, so what about the argument of "defense against the criminal"? This argument holds that if an unsated murderer escapes to kill again, one would wish him to have been executed before this happened. But John Paul in an allocution spoke of the rarity with which people get out of high-security prisons, though of course this observation doesn't bear on prisoners whose sentences are commuted.

The third traditional ground is deterrence, and Cardinal Dulles here acknowledges that evidence is not conclusive, and remarks in passing that executions being at this point pretty private affairs, such attention as they used to get when done in public squares no longer serves to dampen the spirits of inattentive potential murderers.

So that we are left with the fourth argument, which is retribution. But final justice being in the hands of God, "retribution by the State can only be a symbolic anticipation of God's perfect justice." The theologian is less than persuasive in writing that "In this modern perspective, the death penalty expresses not the divine judgment on objective evil but rather the collective anger of the group. The retributive goal of punishment is misconstrued as a self-assertive act of vengeance." That is to deal lightly with democratic authority to create laws that reflect the gravity of society's disinterested commitment to guard human life.

Dulles concludes: "The Pope and the bishops, using their prudential judgment, have concluded that in contemporary society, at least in countries like our own, the death penalty ought not to be invoked, because, on balance, it does more harm than good. I personally support this position."

A position arrived at, by this formidable theologian, with less than the kind of clarity and conviction that exercise an arresting hold on the morally discriminating. What engages the curiosity more piquantly is precisely the argument that life sentences should be for life. Surely it is wrong, in the Christian perspective, to foreclose on hope?

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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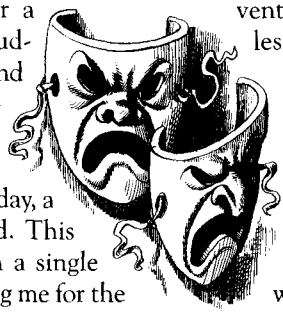
▪ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ▪

FLORENCE KING

FROM time to time over the past few years, I have heard from people who wrote to congratulate me for providing a mailing address instead of an e-mail address at the bottom of this page.

Their letters invariably gave off a tone composed of equal parts of "we happy few," "us against the world," and "hold the fort," and slipped easily into a cantankerous grumble that instantly identified them as the work of a type familiar to anyone who writes for a conservative audience: Luddites, who hate anything and everything new simply because it's new.



Judging by my latest trip to the post office the other day, a new mood has taken hold. This time I got three letters in a single batch of mail, each thanking me for the mailing address in almost plangent terms, without a trace of Luddite grumbling. In fact, all three letters fairly throbbed with weary gratitude.

One correspondent got carried away, taking my P.O. Box as evidence of an exalted level of virtue on my part, saying, "I'll bet you don't even have e-mail." It reminded me of an incident in my teens when a man silenced the audible cussing of his buddies for my benefit, explaining, "I can tell you're not that kind of girl."

Actually I was, I just didn't look it. By the same token, I do have e-mail, but I save it for marriage—i.e., NATIONAL REVIEW. It's how I get this column into their computer, bicker with my editor over commas, and nag him for a galley.

The three mailing-address letters stuck in my mind and got me to wondering why my P.O. Box came to be transformed into an Edenic niche. As any writer will confirm, getting three letters on the same subject on the same day means you have struck a nerve worth writing about. I told myself there had to be a column in it somewhere and, lo and behold, here it is.

High-tech living has thrust us all into an inescapable state of terror and revulsion that is wearing us out. The ease of computers and the instantaneous reach of fax machines are all well and good, but they are so sensitive and complex that each time we turn them on we brace ourselves, heads cocked like paranoid maniacs, listening for the various hums and buzzes and ding-a-lings to judge whether they sound the way they usually do. If they don't, we go into instant nervous prostration and give vent to the *cri de cœur* of the helpless, cringing souls we have become: "It's doing something different!"

At such times we get an Error Message, which is much worse than hearing a good honest clunk or snap, or even an explosion. At least back when things simply "broke," as it was called, you could understand what happened and why. During the typewriter era when I wrote for *Cosmopolitan*, I used so many italics that one day the underline key broke. It just fell right off. I heard the metallic clatter and saw it lying in the bottom of the machine and fished it out. If I had had the right tools I could have put it back on myself, but nowadays eyesight and common sense will get you nowhere, and the occasional successful poke with nail files and bobby pins is a thing of the past. The very concept of brokenness is gone. The computers our lives depend on "freeze" or "crash" but they never break.

We do. The psychological wounds inflicted by high-tech are the stuff of daily life now.

1. Whenever we have a technical problem, we always assume that our own equipment is at fault. It never occurs to us that the other infernal machine we are trying to connect with might be doing something different, or that the billions of tiny wires and chips in the telecom center might be doing something different as well. Thus, self-blame, followed by self-pity, are the personality traits most likely to develop in low-tech people in high-tech times. Poe had his raven, Coleridge had his albatross, and Thompson had his Hound of Heaven. At least they got some immortal lines out of their agony, but all we can show for ours is "It's doing something different!"

2. Conservatives like to think that the old republican virtues will return if only we make government small and unobtrusive, but in truth, self-reliance and Yankee ingenuity don't have a chance when people no longer have the confidence to snarl, "What the hell is wrong with this goddamn thing!" The respect accorded computers is so total you can almost hear the hush. They are the first invention Americans have been afraid to tinker with; the adventurous experiment on-screen and become proficient hackers, but taking a computer apart "to see how it works" is an idea whose time has gone. As a result, we are becoming a people who are losing sight of what tinkerers used to call the "big picture," voluntarily arranging ourselves into a majority class of computerized helots in thrall to a small priestly class of techno-snot Druids.

3. High-tech is hell on women, forcing us into the worst kind of regression. We used to play dumb when the subject turned to cars and football, but computers have saved us from the need to pretend. Now we really are dumb, and more dependent on men than ever because high-tech has put us at the mercy of all those Customer Support misogynists lurking behind their 800 numbers, who make the sadistic plumbers and TV repairmen castigated by early feminism look positively supportive.

Worst of all, the male-dominated world of high-tech, where upgrading never stops, has succeeded in upgrading the battle of the sexes with a megagigabyte of irony. Computers are delicate mechanisms whose power resides in mysterious interior places; there is no way of knowing whether or not they will respond; they react with hysteria to some little problem that wouldn't bother anybody but a computer; and they have achieved the status of "can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em." It's only a matter of time before they join ships under the mantle of "she," but the techno-snots will never caress the word as sailors do. **NR**

Miss King can be reached at P.O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

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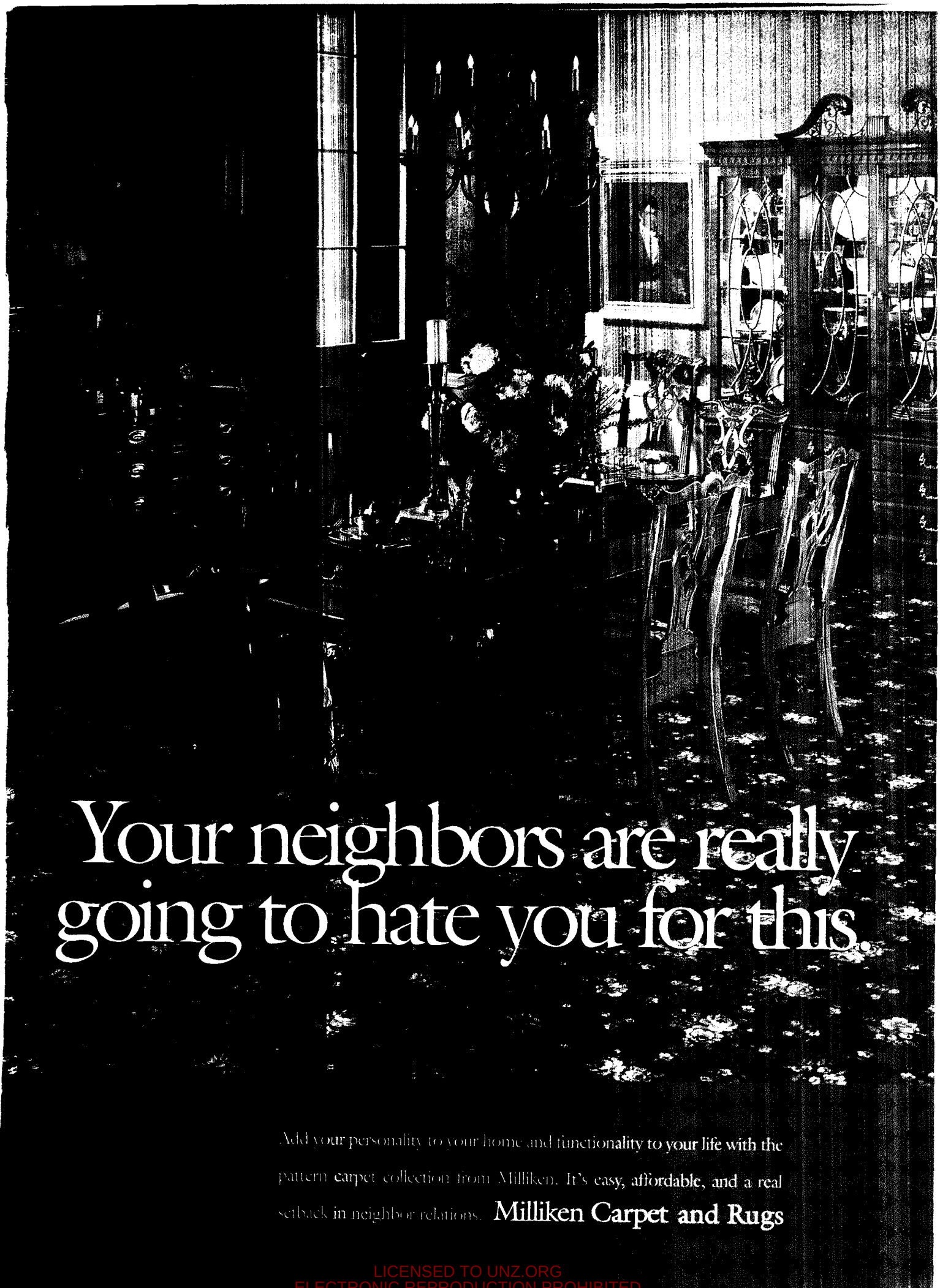
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